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DIDO BUILDING CARTHAGE.

THE STORY

OF

The Letters and Figures

BY

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"Readings in Folklore," "The Story of the Britons," Etc.

ILLUSTRATED

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

While this volume is addressed especially to young readers, it will be found valuable to teachers and to the public generally. The unsatisfactory character of the school work in orthography, and especially in orthoëpy, at the present time, and the oft-expressed desire of teachers for a book that will throw a clear light upon these subjects, leads us to believe that there is a real and present need for such a book.

The story is entertaining in itself. It explains the inconsistencies of English spelling. It brings out, letter by letter, the subject of orthoëpy, making careful distinctions, and developing in the reader a critical judgment of sounds.

The book is an extension of the popular lecture on the subject which Dr. Skinner has been delivering for the past five years, and which has been received with marked appreciation.

Many thanks to old Cadmus, who made us his debtors
By inventing, one day, those *CAPITAL LETTERS.*

—*Saxe.*

PREFACE

American boys and girls are always interested in stories of inventions and inventors. In no other nation has inventive genius been more developed than in ours, and nowhere else is such genius so highly appreciated or so substantially rewarded.

It would seem strange that the story of the greatest of all human inventions has not been often told in popular form, for young readers. The story is entertaining in itself, and it is inseparably connected with valuable culture materials along collateral lines.

To the young reader especially this volume is addressed. Its purpose is not simply to afford entertainment, or to offer information on culture themes related to its subject. It aims to explain the inconsistencies of English orthography, and to inculcate a practical knowledge of orthoëpy. More than this, it seeks to throw light on one of the deepest and most important of practical problems. With the astonishing growth and expansion of the English-speaking peoples, there is an ever-deepening sense of regret that our orthography is so unscientific and capricious, our alphabet so ill-suited to the needs of the greatest language of the world.

It is due to the pupil in English that he learn, in the history of the alphabet, the conditions which have caused our orthography to assume a form so unsatisfactory. With a more general knowledge of the sub-

ject, there will be less danger from ill-advised schemes for orthographic reform, and a more patient acceptance of the inconveniences of our imperfect orthographic system.

In this "Story of the Letters and Figures" it has not been deemed advisable to discuss the theories which seek to establish some connection between the alphabet of the Phœnicians and the earlier written characters of the Egyptians. It is enough that the Phœnicians invented an alphabet of their own language, made up of home materials, and that it was a marvel of adaptation to their needs; that, having passed through the hands of the Greeks and the Romans, successively, with various changes, it became ours, to use with a language to which it was ill-adapted.

Let it be understood that when we speak of the Phœnician alphabet maker we do not mean the first man who conceived the idea of representing sounds by means of written characters. Nor do we mean, necessarily, the first Phœnician who made use of written characters in this way. We mean the man who, either individually or in company with others, chose the forms of the characters, saw in them rude pictures of familiar objects, determined their number, gave them their names, and arranged them in a definite and regular order. This work was done, doubtless, in Phœnicia, whatever of foreign material and suggestions the alphabet maker may have had before him, to work upon.

The history of the alphabet is a subject of importance to the English speaking nations, since they may

be compelled, in time, to institute some practical alphabetic and orthographic reforms, for which they are now unprepared, and since it will be necessary to bring to the discussion of projected changes of this class the fullest knowledge of orthographic history and conditions.

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THE STORY OF THE

LETTERS AND FIGURES

CHAPTER I.

THE ALPHABET LESSON OF THE CHILD JESUS.

In some of the Apocryphal Gospels there is a story of the childhood of Jesus which the reader does not soon forget. He is apt to fill it out in his imagination, and to give it a meaning beyond the intention of the writers of these books; for it is very striking and suggestive.

Of the childhood of Jesus very little is told us in the books of the Bible. He spent his early years in the village of Nazareth, "being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph." He "waxed strong, filled with wisdom." As the supposed child of Joseph, he went in and out among the children of the village, sharing their common experiences. As such he entered a school, to be taught the elementary studies of the time. Here, in the story, we find him passing through that most familiar of the experiences of childhood, the learning of the alphabet. The letters were learned, one at a time, by rote, and in regular order from first to last, as a preliminary to the first steps in actual reading. It is interesting to note

that this method was pursued through all the Christian ages, down to a time within the memory of middle-aged men of today.

The school at Nazareth doubtless lacked the brightness and cheer of the schools in our day, or even of those in Roman times. The child of the Imperial City was often coaxed by presents of sweetmeats to learn the letters. When he had learned *A*, he might *eat* the letter in the form of a sweet cake or confection. The use of the alphabet in our time suggests the comic paper or the book of humor quite as much as the grave and solemn in literature. It was the desire to enjoy the "Arabian Nights" that led the women of France to learn to read.

To the Hebrew child the use of letters was associated always with the Word of God. The literature of his nation was almost wholly religious and generally of a stern and solemn character. The copyist who transcribed the sacred writings must stop and wipe his pen clean before writing the letters which spelt the name of God. Every letter was instinct with awe.

The Hebrew page possessed nothing of the variety of a modern book. There were no small letters; all were capitals. There were no figures, for the alphabet answered all the purposes of notation. Pictures there were not in the sacred rolls.

The school at Nazareth—the one with which the story deals—was conducted by a man whose name is variously given. Doubtless he was a stern and learned man, unsuited to his task. Even in our own country it was not until the time of the War of the Secession, when the men were called away to the battlefield, that we fully

learned the fact that the instruction of young children is properly a woman's work.

To the school at Nazareth went the child Jesus at an early age, and on its benches he sat with his fellows. On some form of chart, doubtless, the schoolmaster had drawn the quaint and curious letters. With pointer in hand, he called the little ones forward, and pointed in order to *Aleph* (ah′-lef), *Beth* (baith), and *Gimel* (ghe′-mel)—the *A*, *B*, and *C*, with which the list began. Childhood is childhood in all ages. We can see the hesitation of some, the ill-suppressed eagerness of others, to pronounce the names of the characters.

The schoolmaster calls upon Jesus, and points to the letter at the head of the column. The child does not answer, but stands with his clear, blue eyes fixed upon the cabalistic symbol, as if absorbed in thought or overwhelmed with emotion. The schoolmaster, however, sees in him only stupidity and inattention. He speaks again, but to no purpose. He drops his pointer from *Aleph* to *Beth*, and demands the name of the latter. Still the child is mute. The pointer drops from *Beth* to *Gimel*, and the schoolmaster thunders his demand for its name. Not even yet does the child speak. Yet he is neither witless nor careless, if only the schoolmaster will observe. Nor does he tremble at his teacher's rage. Calmly he raises his eyes to meet the stern face above him.

Like many a cruel schoolmaster in every age, the rabbi raises his pointer to inflict a blow upon the childish form. But the blow does not descend. Arrested by some unseen power, the arm remains uplifted. Then the fair hair of the child is gently stirred, and the rosy lips move.

The little boy knows all of the letters, and all there is to know about them. It is as if he said, as perhaps we are to understand that he *did* say, "Yes, Rabbi, that is *Aleph.* But, Rabbi, *what is Aleph?*"

What might have been the thought of the child Jesus on surveying that wonder of the ages, which was to transform the world? What was the tremendous significance of that vehicle and preserver of human thought, by means of which one age speaks to another across the centuries; by means of which messages of love and cheer are exchanged with the absent; without which we should have not a syllable of recorded history; for want of which we should have no legacy of literature; through which the mighty traffic of the nations is conducted; upon which the higher civilization of the world must forever rest? What, moreover, is the *meaning* of *A*, *B*, and *C*? Why are the lines drawn as they are? Whence came they? Do such things come by chance? What is their history? How long has man possessed them?

How many of us today could really answer the question of the child Jesus if it were addressed to us? Possibly it has risen to the lips of more than one child in every generation. Certainly there are children of a larger growth who have longed to know fully and completely the lesson of the alphabet. But alas! there is not a university in the world in which this lesson has been fully mastered. Some of our greatest scholars are diligently seeking to learn more of it. It unlocks many secrets in the world of language and of history.

The Apocryphal Gospels in which this story of the

Jesus at School Age.

child Jesus is briefly told have never been admitted to the list of historical books, much less to the canon of Scripture. Of its truth, not a word need be said. That does not matter at all. It is folklore; and often folklore is valuable for its own sake. It supplies pictures of the people among whom it originates. There are many of us—and our number is growing rapidly—who love the study of the folklore of old time, finding in it more that is picturesque and human in its interest than we find in the histories upon which we rely, and feeling for those of whom it tells a more genuine sympathy than for the characters with which history deals.

There are very few pictures representing Jesus in the years of his boyhood. In Murillo's "Divine Shepherd" he is portrayed as a child such as might have entered the school of the rabbi. This is a strong picture, and represents the boy with a lamb and a tiny crook, at play in the character of a shepherd.

The story of the child Jesus and his alphabet lesson suggests that even to young readers the story of the alphabet—long the exclusive possession of a learned few —may be both interesting and profitable. And to young readers a general outline of the story, as set forth in these pages, is especially addressed.

CHAPTER II.

OUR ALPHABET AS IT IS.

Travelers in old countries sometimes take delight in viewing and studying an ancient building which was constructed in parts by various builders, at different periods of time. Some portions of the structure are now useless, except for historical purposes. New additions seem to be needed, but for various reasons they cannot easily be supplied. Some parts of the building have been used in a manner not contemplated by the original builders, and changes have been made in the structure, from time to time, by those who have successsively possessed it.

If it were a new building, it would be very different. It would be carefully adapted in every way to the needs of the present time. It would exhibit the results of long experience and careful training on the part of the architect and the workmen. It would be found especially suited to the purpose of the builder, showing a unity of design in all its parts. Yet often the ancient building will be found to possess greater interest than the most perfect modern edifice. It is like a history or a poem, written in brick and stone. Perhaps it has done great service to the world. Its very faults are treasured as souvenirs of ancient days; and the associations which cluster around it have endeared it to the people as a monument of the past. Moreover, it might be found incapable of being modernized.

If we could point to such a building which had been erected in part by the Phœnicians of old; which had come into the possession of the ancient Greeks, to be in part discarded, then extended and altered to suit their needs; which had passed thence into the hands of the Romans, to be further modified; and which, finally, had come to be the possession of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers, to be transmitted to us, we might regard it as a parallel to the alphabet which we use.

There is no building which has passed through this particular succession of ownership; but among the storied palaces and towers of the Old World there are many that have histories similar to this. Any one of them may be used as an illustration of the manner in which our alphabet, in the slow course of ages, has been constructed, and will illustrate its imperfections, as viewed from the standpoint of practical utility.

The ancient Phœnicians prepared an alphabet of twenty-two letters. The ancient Greeks received at first, probably fifteen of these, and afterwards borrowed or invented enough more to round out an alphabet of twenty-four letters. The Romans appropriated eighteen of these, and added seven more. The Anglo-Saxons received all of these, and added two more. One of the latter they afterwards dropped, so that we now have twenty-six in all.

We have a large number of elementary sounds in our language, and but twenty-six letters to represent them. Of course, we cannot arrange to have each letter represent always the same sound. Some of the letters are sadly overburdened. Think of the variety of sounds

represented by the letter *A* in the words *ale*, *ax*, *ask*, *father*, *all*, *chair*, *sofa*, etc. So unscientific a scheme of representation as this would lead to endless confusion if we did not resort to various expedients. We make use of silent letters. We use, often, diacritical marks. We use combinations called digraphs, to represent elementary sounds. We resort to analogy. And after all, we are often much perplexed at the inconsistencies of our spelling, and are wont, at times, to complain of the utter inadequacy of our alphabet to accomplish its purpose properly.

At the same time, we have letters to spare. So far as the sound is concerned, we have no need for our *C*. Used regularly, it has either the sound of *S* or that of *K*. If one of these letters were substituted where *C* occurs, we should not be in doubt as to the sound represented. Nor do we need the *Q*, for its sound is essentially that of *K*. Our *X*, moreover, is practically but a combination of *K* and *S*. It is somewhat exasperating to find our alphabet incumbered with letters which are not needed to express the sounds, when we feel so sore a need for additional letters of another sort.

We must remember that the alphabet which has come down to us was not made for our language originally, but for a very different one, having few vowels and many very peculiar consonants; and that we use it as an ill-fitting garment is sometimes worn by a person of a very different figure from that of the one for whom it was made.

Our Anglo-Saxon forefathers, as previously stated, added only two letters to those which they received from

the Romans. These were *Wen* and *Thorn*. They were suitable and much-needed letters, though unfortunate in form. We have modified the shape of the *Wen*, and now call it by the odd name of "*Double U*" (*W*). It is not a double letter, though made like a combination of two *V's*. The French always call it "*Double V*." We have dropped the *Thorn* altogether, we are sorry to say, and have substituted for it the digraph *TH*. *Thorn*, unfortunately, was too much like *Y* in its form; but this might have been easily changed. *Thorn* is often mistaken for *Y*, where it appears in the inscriptions on old tombstones and elsewhere. In reproducing these in type, the printers of our day are apt to represent the letter by *Y*, since they have no *Thorn* types. Those who are not acquainted with the old character make amusing mistakes when they read the quaint old lettering in which it appears as, for instance,

"YE OLDE INN;"

"YE KNIGHTE OF YE REDDE CROSSE;"

"HEARE LYES YE BODIE OF," etc.

That the English-speaking world, so advanced in every element of civilization, and so given to the practical application of scientific thought to almost everything else, should make use of an alphabet so unscientific as ours, so inadequate in some respects and so redundant in others, necessitating the illogical use of silent letters and of digraphs, with a frequent resort to diacritical

marks; that it should continue so many absurdities in the spelling of words,—is explained by the history of the alphabet and the necessities which spring from circumstance. By studying this history, and by taking the circumstances into account, we shall be better prepared to realize the import and the consequences of changes that have been or may be proposed.

CHAPTER III

BEFORE THE ALPHABET WAS.

Perhaps the reason why we have paid so little attention to the invention of the alphabet is that it was effected so long ago. Length of time, however, is purely a relative matter. We are in error if we suppose that alphabetic writing was acquired in the infancy of the race, and hence did not mark an era in our development; that it was so natural and simple an art as to be commonplace, and worthy of no special note as an achievement.

The fact is, that man lived on the earth much longer without the alphabet than he has lived with it. The race was already old when the art of alphabetic writing was first acquired. Great nations grew up; large armies were assembled and marshaled; cities developed in population and in various arts of civilized life; codes of laws were promulgated, and courts rendered judgment; and long poems were composed and recited for generations, before the art of alphabetic writing was acquired.

Of the history of nations before the invention or use of letters, we have little definite knowledge. Very ancient legends there are, but these contain much that is untrue, and it is impossible to tell in what proportions truth and error are commingled in them. The remains of ancient works of architecture, and of weapons, ornaments, etc., which are brought to light by the excavations made by archæologists, give us a clue to the life of various

peoples in prehistoric ages, and sometimes prove that there is much truth in the ancient legendary tales that have come down to us.

Picture-writing existed long before the alphabet, and symbols were used to express ideas rather than specific words. A picture of the moon might represent a month, since our satellite requires about a month to pass through its changes of phase. Among the American Indians, a pipe, rudely drawn, or a camp fire symbolized peace, just as a picture of a tomahawk signified war. Numbers could be indicated by notches cut in a stick, or straight marks drawn upon a parchment or a tablet.

The ancient Celts, even when they possessed the art of writing (using the Greek letters), preferred that the vast learning of their priesthood should not be committed to writing at all. The youths who studied at their schools, through a period of many years, learned by oral lessons, and retained their knowledge by sheer force of memory. The better to facilitate the memorizing of language, it was expressed in metrical form—that is, in poetry, or verse. Thus poetry is much older than written prose. Many people wonder at this when they do not understand the reason for it.

Poetry is learned with much the greater ease. It was necessary that the laws be composed in poetry, in order to preserve their exact wording. Sometimes they were set to music, and sung by the people. The exact expression was thus preserved; for alterations would cause flaws in the meter, and would be instantly detected. Poetry was thus a necessity before the invention of the alphabet. And because of the comparative fewness of words, figures

of speech were constantly employed. These are not so much needed now, but we often find them very beautiful, and we call them poetical expressions.

The use of purely mnemonic verse is not wholly unknown, even in our own time. How helpful is the old jingle which runs—

"Thirty days hath September,
April, June, and November," etc.,

and that other composition which tells us the names of the British sovereigns, beginning with—

"First William the Norman,
Then William his son,
Henry, Stephen, and Henry,
Then Richard and John," etc.

After men began to write histories, they were aided very much by the ancient songs that were sung of the heroes of prehistoric days; and these, with the fuller legends that were recounted in prose, enabled them to speak with some degree of accuracy of events long anterior to the time of the earliest writers.

The war of Troy, while not strictly an historical event, is generally the starting point in the history of Europe. No one knows just when it occurred, but it is supposed to have been nearly twelve centuries, at least, before Christ.

Troy was in Asia Minor, near the strait which we call the Dardanelles, which separates Europe from Asia. The war, however, was waged against it by the people of Greece, who were Europeans. The story of the conflict is highly romantic. It it said that Paris, a

son of the great king of Troy, visited Sparta, in Greece, and stole away the wife of Menela'us, the king. This queen, whose name was Helen, was no ordinary queen. She was deemed the most beautiful woman in the world. So idolized was she in Greece that, while she was yet a maid, it was agreed among the Greek princes that they would unite to make war upon any one who should abduct her from her future husband, and that they would thus render secure his possession of his rare prize.

The trouble came from an unexpected quarter. For it was not a Greek marauder, but the son of the great and powerful king of the Trojans, who committed the base deed. Troy was distant, and was admirably fortified. Up to this time the Greeks had been considered almost barbarians by the haughty and cultured Trojans. But the Greek states all united in the great undertaking, and organized the strongest possible force of soldiers and sailors to reduce the proud capital. Agamem'non was chosen to the supreme command and bore the sublime title of "King of Men." Troy, or Ilium—for the city had two names—fell, at last, into the hands of the Greeks. Helen was recovered, and the Trojans were punished with destruction for the crime of their prince.

The war exerted a vast influence upon the Greeks. It gave them a lesson on the value of union. It gave them a common heritage of glory. And in all the ages since, it has been a source of pride to their descendants and a tie to bind them together.

Homer's great poem, the "Iliad," contains twenty-four books. It seems to us, at first, incredible that such a poem should have been composed and transmitted for

centuries without the aid of writing. But this is undoubtedly the fact. It should be remembered, however, that the learning of poetry was not a mere accomplishment in the ancient days. To compose and to recite poems was a profession, and possessed a strictly business basis. Men were trained to it from childhood, and made it the occupation of their lives. It is a well-known fact in our own day that much of the ritual of Masonry has never been committed to writing, but is preserved orally, and without alteration, from generation to generation. There is a rhythm, a musical charm, to the "Iliad," which renders it a delight to scholars to this day; and many students have been known to commit large portions of it to memory.

The excavations made by Dr. Henry Schliemann on the reputed site of old Troy, a third of a century ago, seem to establish the truth of much that is related in this famous poem, and indicate the surprisingly high state of civilization which the Greeks had reached without the aid of an alphabet.

It is interesting to note, in reading the poem, how unconscious the poet was of any such means of communication. Although the "Iliad" was composed some generations after the great events described, there is, of course, nowhere the slightest reference or allusion to anything *written* concerning them, or to any monument containing any sort of lettering in commemoration of them. There is no mention of a name on any tomb.

There were many, many ships—over eleven hundred in all—employed in this war, as the Greeks all had to cross the Aegean sea to reach the Trojan territory. The

names of the commanders of all the divisions of this navy are carefully preserved in the poem; and in recounting them, and in telling the number of ships commanded by each, the poet makes a supreme effort at accuracy, invoking the Muse to aid him especially in this part of his narrative, though it presented no difficulty in composition, but only in the remembering of the names and the numbers. Nowhere in the story is a ship recognized by its name, as a ship would probably be, among so many, if the names had been written upon them. Messages of great importance are sent from one chieftain to another, but they are always delivered orally.

One of the most striking instances of the manner in which men were enabled to manage affairs without the use of letters is shown in the selection of a certain Greek leader for a special act of heroism. This is related in the Seventh Book of the "Iliad," and is a familiar incident of the war.

Much of the fighting about Troy was done by individual champions, as in the case of David and Goliath, related in the Bible. Each army would be represented, in such a contest, by its champion, and the battle would prove a duel unless others were drawn into it.

A famous Trojan champion there was, named Hector, whose boastings and taunts have become so proverbial among us as to give us the word *hectoring*. The name of this mighty warrior was sufficient to inspire terror in the hearts of all except the bravest of men. The Greeks must choose a champion to meet him in single combat. In making their choice they cast lots. To us this seems to mean a resort to mere *chance* for the selection of a

Menelaus. *Paris* *Diomedes.* *Odysseus.* *Nestor.* *Achilles.* *Agamemnon.*

HEROES OF THE TROJAN WAR.

person. But to the ancients it often meant leaving the matter to the will of the gods; for the gods were supposed to direct the issue when the lots were cast.

A helmet served as a basket to contain the lots, whatever these may have been. Into this helmet each of the Greek leaders placed some sort of a token—perhaps a pebble, a shell, or a stick, which he had marked in some peculiar way, taking care to remember the kind of mark he had made. The officer in charge, when all the tokens were received, shook them together, and then caused the uppermost one to fall out upon the ground. He did not know whose token it was, even when he had picked it up and examined it; but he went around from chief to chief, to ask each one if it had his mark. It proved to belong to an impetuous man named Aias, or Ajax, the son of Oi'leus; and accordingly he was declared to be the champion of the Greeks for the contest about to follow.

Not alone are the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," attributed to Homer, preserved, to tell the story of the heroes of the Trojan war. Later compositions of the ancient Greek writers, in the form of tragedies to be acted in theaters, present the same characters in powerful delineations. Among the tragedies of Sophocles, who lived four centuries before Christ, is the play of "Ai'as," or "A'jax," which you may be interested to read. This ancient play was acted by Greeks, in the original, at Hull House in Chicago, in December, 1903.

The selection of Aias to be the champion of the Greeks, which is a matter of such interest as an instance

of pre-alphabetic life, is described in the following verses of the "Iliad":

—Straight arose nine warriors from their seats.
The first was Agamem'non, king of men;
The second, brave Tydi'des Di'omed;
And then the chieftain A'jax, bold and strong;
And then Idom'eneus, with whom arose
Meri'ones, his armor bearer, great
As Mars himself in battle. After them,
Euryp'ylus, Evae'mon's valiant son,
And Thoas, offspring of Andrae'mon, rose,
And the divine Ulysses—claiming all
To encounter noble Hector in the lists.

But then spake Nestor, the Gere'nian knight:
"Now let us cast the lot for all, and see
To whom it falls: for greatly will he aid
The nobly armed Achaians, and as great
Will be his share of honor, should he come
Alive from the hard trial of the fight."

Then each one marked his lot, and all were cast
Into the helm of Agamem'non, son
Of A'treus. All the people lifted up
Their hands in prayer to the ever-living gods,
And turned their eyes to the broad heaven, and said:
"Grant, Father Jove, that Ajax, or the son
Of Ty'deus, or the monarch who bears rule
In rich Myce'ne, may obtain the lot."

Such was their prayer, while the Gerenian knight,
Old Nestor, shook the lots; and from the helm
Leaped forth the lot of Ajax, as they wished.
A herald took it, and from right to left
Bore it through all the assembly, showing it
To all the leaders of the Greeks. No one

Maignan.

THE PARTING OF HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE.

Knew it, and all disclaimed it. When at last
Carried through all the multitude, it came
To A'jax the renowned, who had inscribed
And laid it in the helmet, he stretched forth
His hand, while at his side the herald stood,
And took and looked upon it, knew his sign,
And gloried as he looked, and cast it down
Upon the ground before his feet, and said:
"O friends, the lot is mine, and I rejoice
Heartily, for I think to overcome
The noble Hector. Now, while I put on
My armor for the fight, pray ye to Jove,
The mighty son of Saturn, silently,
Unheard by them of Troy, or else aloud,
Since we fear no one. None by strength of arm
Shall vanquish me, or find me inexpert
In battle. Nor was I to that degree
Ill-trained in Sal'amis, where I was born."

He spake; and they to Saturn's monarch-son
Prayed, looking up to the broad heaven, and said:

"O Father Jove! most mighty, most august!
Who rules from the Idae'an mount, vouchsafe
That Ajax bear away the victory
And everlasting honor; but if thou
Dost cherish Hector and preserve his life,
Give equal strength to both, and equal fame."

The departure of Hector for this battle is the subject of a favorite passage in Homer's "Iliad" (Book VI.). The scene of his farewell to his wife, Androm'ache, and to his infant son, Asty'anax, is portrayed in notable paintings, and is one of the most familiar pictures of that famous war. Maignan's conception of the scene is shown in the illustration.

CHAPTER IV.

A NATION OF ANCIENT YANKEES.

Many centuries before the time of Christ there was a nation of ancient Yankees who lived at the very east end of the Mediterranean Sea, where the shore runs north and south. Before them, to the west, rolled the great sea, which seemed far greater than the ocean seems to us today. Behind them extended a range of mountains, following generally the line of the coast, a short distance inland. The mountains were steep, and difficult to climb. In some places they reached almost to the water, leaving not room enough for even a good road. In others they receded several miles from the sea. The Greeks gave the land a name which we call Phœnicia, and which had reference to the palm trees which grew in the more fertile tracts along the shore.

This narrow and largely sterile line of coast offered but a poor prospect to the Phœnicians. Their villages were built upon jutting rocks and stretches of sand. An alkaline plant grew among the stones on the beach, and had a taste like that of saleratus, but was worthless for food. Goats could find ample sustenance among the mountain rocks, and there were tracts in the valleys where grains would grow abundantly by careful cultivation; but the chief dependence of the people was fishing.

Whoever heard of a nation that became rich by fishing alone? "Poor fishermen" is a proverbial expression. Some of the disciples of Jesus were "poor fishermen" before he called them to be "fishers of men;" and this fact is accepted as an evidence of their lowly station.

But the Phœnicians turned their fishing to account in such a way as to render them for a long time the leaders of the world in wealth and in civilization. The Phœnicians were near neighbors of the Jews, or Hebrews, of the Holy Land, to whom they were related, as a branch of the same race. In the Bible they are spoken of as the Canaanites; and in the Good Book you may read how they vexed the souls of the pious Israelites by their idolatry, and made war against the "chosen people."

Two things the Phœnicians could do, besides catching fish. They could invent, and they could keep a secret; and these lay at the bottom of their great and wonderful success in the industrial and commercial world. They possessed a natural aptitude for trade, and they were shrewd enough to obtain and to hold for ages a monopoly in some of the most important lines of manufacture and traffic.

Among the shell-fish which they caught was a kind of mussel, in the shell of which was a tiny amount of creamy fluid which could by some process be transformed into a rich stain, or dye, that imparted a fixed color when applied to cloth. Here was their great opportunity. They made robes of woolen stuffs, and dyed them a gorgeous purple. They learned also to embroider them with beautiful designs. They invented, doubtless,

many new details of collars and cuffs, capes, belts, fastenings, and what not. No other people in the world could compare with them in producing articles of dress. Names of colors sometimes change. The purple of the Phœnician robes, it is said, was almost a red. Whatever it was, it awakened the envy of the world by its majestic beauty.

One time a party of sailors, as we are told, were shipwrecked on the wild Phœnician coast, at the mouth of the river Belus, but managed to escape from the angry sea and to find a firm footing on the sand and rocks. Shivering and half drowned, they made the most of their circumstances on the inhospitable shore. Gathering driftwood, they succeeded in some way in starting a fire, which produced an intense heat. They dried their clothing, warmed their bodies, and at length lay down to rest in profound slumber.

It was long ere they awoke. Then they discovered that their big fire had burned out. To their astonishment, they found among the embers a curious, transparent substance of great beauty. It was brittle and hard. It glittered in the light. Their fire had melted the silica contained in the sand and rocks amid which it had been built. Probably the alkaline weed which grew among them had supplied the alkali needed for the manufacture of *glass* by the melting of the silica. At all events, the process was now known for making, artificially, that marvelous substance which, as found in nature, is called quartz, and which, when made by man, is capable of being used in so many forms of beauty and

of usefulness. And for the manufacture of glass Phœnicia became famed throughout all nations.

The metal of chief importance in the ancient world was bronze. Countless articles of prime necessity—arms, tools, and implements, parts of vehicles, etc.—were made of it, as well as articles of taste and beauty for ornament and decoration. Bronze was made of copper mixed with tin. Copper, by itself, was too soft, and too easily corroded, for many purposes. Bronze was harder, more beautiful, more enduring. To mix the two metals in the right proportion, to mold them most advantageously and artistically, involved secrets of manufacture which the Phœnicians, after discovering them, were no more likely to divulge than they were to disclose the processes of making their purple robes and their glassware.

But perhaps the most difficult and perplexing problem which confronted them was the procuring of tin, for the manufacture of their bronze ware. Tin was rare in the East. Whence could they procure it in large quantities?

Two great manufacturing and commercial cities arose in Phœnicia. These were Sidon and Tyre. They became filled with factories and warehouses and offices, and their harbors swarmed with boats. The Phœnicians sought to sell to the wealthy, who could pay them enormous prices for their goods. They persuaded the kings and queens of the world that a "purple" robe was the only dress suitable for a monarch or for his spouse. They caused the nobles to court the honor of being permitted to wear "purple" robes, like their royal masters. In how many grand halls in the palaces of the old

nations were the Phœnician robes displayed at the great feasts and receptions of the court! How many men were spurred on by covetousness to win, by fair means or by foul, those badges of royalty and of aristocracy!

The kings of the old world, while far more numerous than now, were relatively much further apart. It was necessary to make long journeys to receive and fill the orders of these very profitable customers. It was necessary to make them also for the purpose of finding tin, to supply the demands of the workers in bronze. Larger and stronger ships were built. Farther and farther over the great sea went the Phœnician ships. Phœnician colonies were planted at remote places on its islands and shores. The most famous of these was Carthage, which stood where the city of Tunis now stands, on the northern coast of Africa, and which, after the later city of Rome was built, was for centuries its rival and bitter foe.

Most surprising of all is the fact that the Phœnicians passed beyond the boundaries of the world, as understood in their day—for the world was supposed to be a vast disk of land, lying in the center of an infinite ocean. Through the straits of Gibraltar sailed the bold navigators. On the Atlantic coast of Spain they founded a city which they called Ga'dir, and which the Romans called Gades. This is the Cadiz of to-day, and is believed to be the oldest city in Europe.

Even to Britain went the Phœnicians. Here they found abundant supplies of the precious tin; and Cadiz was made an *entrepot* for stores of this metal. The secret of the supply of tin was carefully guarded, in order that the monopoly which the Phœnicians possessed

TRADERS AT TYRE.

Egyptian. *Phœnician.* *Medo-Persian.* *Libyan.* *Ethiopian.* *Greek.*

might not be lost. Merchants and manufacturers of other lands were eager to learn where tin ore could be procured. They shadowed the Phœnician ships like detectives; but always the Phœnician sailors were able to elude them.

Once, indeed, when one of the Phœnician ships was successfully followed almost to the Scilly islands—the site of the tin mines, near the southwest point of England—the plucky sailors purposely ran their ship upon the rocks and suffered shipwreck, rather than have the source of their supplies discovered.

It is claimed that the Phœnicians, in later times—about six hundred years before Christ—passed entirely around Africa, proceeding southward from the Isthmus of Suez, down the Red Sea, and past the Cape of Good Hope, into the Atlantic, and returned through the Mediterranean Sea to the north side of the Isthmus. In making this voyage they of course crossed the Equator, twice, and they were much perplexed at what seemed to be the strange behavior of the heavenly bodies, which appeared to shift their positions.

In the Mediterranean Sea the Phœnicians colonized the islands of Cyprus (called *Chittim,* in the Bible), Sicily, and Sardinia. Spain has been characterized as "the Mexico and Peru of the ancient world." It is called *Tarshish,* in Scripture.

At home, the cities of Sidon and Tyre became great and wealthy through their manufacture and trade. They were monarchies, and independent one of another in government. Sidon was the older city, but Tyre became the more famous. Even Tyre was outdone by her col-

ony of Carthage. The story of this city is exceedingly romantic, from its beginning to its close. You will read of it in history, in poetry, and perhaps in prose fiction. But there can be no fiction more romantic than the story of the Punic wars. *Punic* is but another form of *Phoenic* (which is the same as *Phoenician*), and it was the term which the Romans used to characterize the Carthagenians.

So far as we know, the first king of Tyre was Abiba'al, who lived in the time of David, the king of Israel. Hiram, the son of Abiba'al, has been famous in all succeeding ages. He was the friend of Solomon, and is mentioned in the Bible. Under his reign his nation developed immensely. From the mountains back of the coast he procured the mighty "cedars of Lebanon," which were valuable for lumber. Pottery, jewelry, and many other products from his factories were sent over the world, together with the purple robes and the glassware; and beautiful specimens of these enduring forms of art are preserved to-day, having survived all the ravages of time. Hiram supplied to Solomon many workmen and much of the material to be used in building the great temple at Jerusalem.

The famous king Hiram is believed to have died nearly a thousand years before Christ. More than a hundred years later, one of his successors, named Mat'gen, died, leaving a son, Pygma'lion, who was then eleven years of age, and a daughter, Elis'sar (Eliza), two years older. It was the wish of the father that the two children should reign jointly—a kind of scheme which never seems to have been very successful, though often pro-

THE FLIGHT OF QUEEN DIDO.

posed in ancient times. The prince and princess headed opposing parties in the state. The nobles, and the very wealthy, favored Elissar; the more numerous class of people sustained Pygmalion, and insisted that he should reign alone.

The young queen married the high priest, Zicharba'al, who was the head of the priesthood in the religion of the state, and the leader of the aristocratic party. The young Pygmalion, having little chance of success in a contest with the powerful prelate, ordered his assassination, which was accomplished. And now the horrible fires of civil war were about to be lighted. It would seem that the city must be destroyed in the deadly contest of class against class, brother against sister, priesthood against laity.

Elissar gathered about her several thousand followers, and was determined to seize the throne, and to punish her husband's murderer. But her plans were discovered, and the populace presented so strong an opposition to the aristocratic party that she became convinced of the futility of the scheme. Unyielding and determined, she resolved—young and widowed as she was—to build a new kingdom in the far West, where she should have no rival. Her followers were strong enough to seize a large number of the ships with which the harbor was filled, and were ready to accompany her whither she would lead.

Thus, without affectionate farewells, without kindly wishes for success from the mass of the people, the nobles of Tyre and many of their retainers left the great and proud city, to face the unknown future. Away they sailed over the Mediterranean, with which the sailors

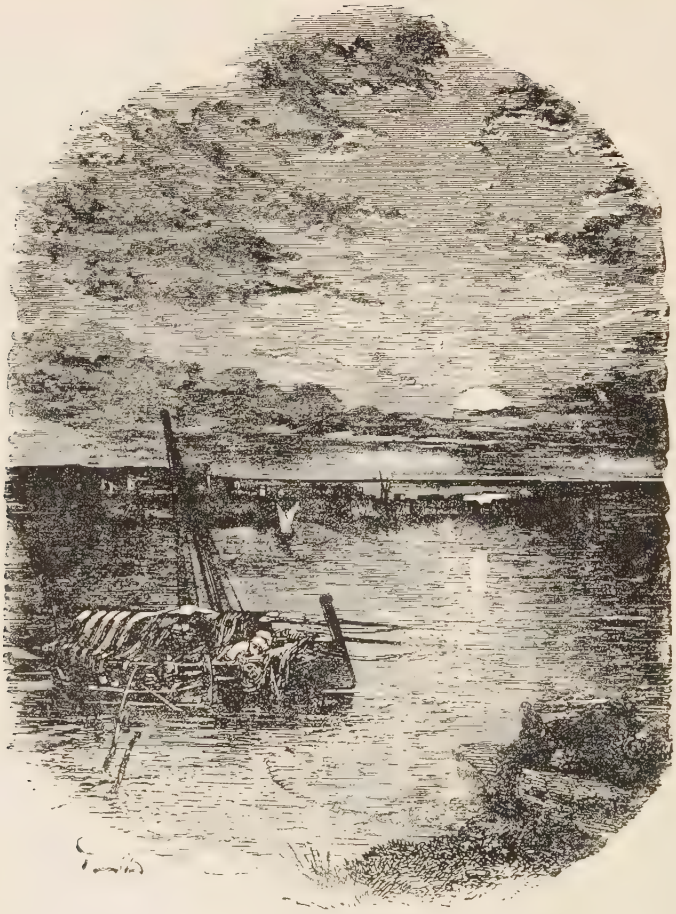
were pretty generally familiar, to the most northern projection of Africa, where they built the city of Carthage. Various traditions of the founding of the city have come down to us. Some of them are very interesting, but we need not stop to consider them here.

It is somewhat pathetic to note that Elissar, in wretchedness of soul at her failure at home, assumed the name of Di'do, which means "fugitive"; but she determined to make that name illustrious—and she succeeded. There is a notable painting by Turner, the English artist, entitled "Dido Building Tyre,"* which is much admired for its fine scenic effect, and especially for its marvelous play of light, so characteristic of its author.

Near the time of Christ, the Roman Vergil wrote his great epic poem, the "Aeneid," in which he recounted the legendary and doubtful story of a Trojan named Aeneas, who was said to have escaped from the destruction of Troy, and to have conducted to Italy many of the Trojan refugees, from whom the Romans in Vergil's day proudly claimed to have descended. In order to make his story more interesting, Vergil tells us that Aeneas paused on his voyage and visited Queen Dido at Carthage; and the Latin poet develops a strong romance, relating that Dido fell in love with Aeneas, and desired to marry him, but found herself deserted, and killed herself in her despair. All this is told with striking effect, and with many particulars, in the Fourth Book of the "Aeneid."

Carthage was founded, it is believed, about the year

* See frontispiece.



The Ruins of Tyre.

869 B. C. But Aeneas (if there ever was such a man) must have made his voyage three hundred years or more before that time; so that Vergil's account of this famous queen must be treated as pure romance, invented for the purpose of adding interest and verisimilitude to the poet's story.

Phœnicia at length fell into decline. The great wealth of Sidon and Tyre caused them to be coveted, plundered, and conquered by successive nations. Their people would rather pay tribute than fight. They did not become effective soldiers. Neither did their country produce great writers. Literature they had practically none. But they invented, explored, manufactured, traded, and amassed prodigious wealth. And thus they were of the greatest service to the world in matters pertaining to its material advancement. Moreover, they contributed immeasurably to the intellectual advancement of mankind through the greatest of all their inventions—the alphabet.

CHAPTER V.

THE GREATEST OF INVENTIONS.

Necessity is the mother of invention. The Phœnicians at an early period in their history found it necessary, in conducting their mercantile operations, to send written messages, and to make records of their business. For a long time, doubtless, they kept account of their articles of commerce by cutting notches upon sticks, or by making marks of some kind. With one kind of notches or marks to indicate articles of one sort, and another kind to denote those of some other description, with certain signs to indicate prices, and with agreed symbols or pictures to represent places, it was possible for them to conduct their business while it was limited in extent. But with the expansion of their industries something better than this was imperatively demanded. There must be some means of communicating thought besides spoken words. There must be *writing*, there must be an alphabet. This was forthcoming.

Some genius discovered that pictures could be used not merely to depict objects or to illustrate scenes, but to record language, by indicating the elementary sounds employed in speaking, so that words might be formed with them. This discovery was simple and natural; yet the same may be said of many other of the greatest discoveries in history. Even without an alphabet or set of

symbols agreed upon in advance, it would be possible to write whole books in English, phonetically, by the use of pictures, and they could be slowly deciphered. All that is necessary is that the name of each object pictured shall begin with the sound to be represented.

Thus three pictures, of a *box*, an *apple*, and a *gun*, would spell the word *bag*. Pictures of a *cap*, an *ax*, and a *nut*, in order, would spell *can*.

It might be said, of course, that it would be far easier to draw the picture of the bag, or of the can, than to depict three objects to represent the letters of each of these words. That is true in reference to a number of the names of things; but it would not answer to express parts of speech other than nouns and pronouns, nor would it suffice to represent efficiently a very large class of things. What was needed was a set of symbols to be used as letters, so that by combining them properly they might express *all* the words of the language.

We need not believe that the Phœnician alphabet was invented slowly and by degrees. When once the conception was fully grasped, there was no real necessity for long delay and experiment. It may have been as, when the idea of the telegraph suggested itself to Morse, and he at once wrote out an alphabet in dots and dashes. The Egyptians had for a very long time used certain signs to represent certain sounds, but they had mixed them with perhaps fifteen times as many other signs, in a complicated system which cannot be described as alphabetic. Probably some Yankee of the ancient East, in Phœnicia, caught the idea from what he saw of Egyptian writing.

The Phœnician alphabet was made up of twenty-two

pictures of familiar objects, which were recognized at once by the readers, and each letter received the name of the object shown in the picture; as *ox*, *house*, *camel*, etc. The letters of the Phœnician alphabet were thus all pictures. They were rudely and simply made; for as soon as the writers became accustomed to their use, it became unnecessary to observe care as to details of the pictures. In fact, in the course of time the resemblance to the objects pictured was almost wholly lost. Perhaps this was deemed desirable, in order that writing might remain a secret art, possessed by a few persons trained especially to use it, and guarded with some care from the people at large.

The characters, as stated, were twenty-two in number. In all respects but one, this was a model alphabet; a single sound was represented by each letter, and every consonant always represented one and the same sound. There was no need for a spelling book. One could not mistake the spelling of a word, for the spelling was phonetic.

The one defect of the alphabet, which seems to us almost an insuperable one, lay in its disregard of vowel sounds. It was almost entirely an alphabet of consonants. In the Phœnician tongue, however, this was not a very serious defect. The vowel sounds were few, and were probably considered of little importance. A commercial people, having practically no literature, they did not cultivate elegance of enunciation. A general vowel letter there was, indicating *some* vowel sound, and this answered their purpose very well. The consonantal sounds included a number which would be wholly foreign

to us. All the consonants were represented clearly and unmistakably.

We have no record of the time at which this magnificent invention was put forth. It would be a source of satisfaction to us to know the very year in which the alphabet was first written, and to honor evermore the benefactor of his race in whose fertile brain the idea was conceived, or by whose cunning fingers the letters were first drawn. Whoever he was, and whenever he may have lived, he is entitled to the gratitude of mankind.

It was fortunate that the alphabet was the possession of a people so energetic, so given to influencing every quarter of the known world. Otherwise it might have existed for many centuries longer confined to some corner of the earth, the exclusive possession of a hermit people. But the roving, trading, pushing Yankees of old, in the course of time, carried their wonderful invention with them to every land which they visited. Like magic it must have seemed to the people of the various lands, when marks upon leather or linen or wood could *speak*, as it were, to their recipients, and communicate the words of the absent. What an engine of power it was to the privileged persons who possessed the secret of it—who could read and write!

The Phœnician letters were eventually adopted for use in languages to which they were not well adapted. The strange names which the Phœnicians gave to the letters were probably not understood by the people of other nations, and were mispronounced; and the original significance of the characters was lost to them.

The mass of men are given to copying, and not to

originating; and thus foreign nations copied the Phœnician letters instead of inventing new ones, better suited to their own needs. Yet it is strange, indeed, that so much of the old Phœnician alphabet remains to-day; that this old alphabet is now the groundwork of those of all the progressive nations of the world. It is not possible now to fix the time at which the alphabet was evolved in Phœnicia.

It was perhaps about fifteen hundred years before Christ that the Phœnician traders visited the Greeks, with boat-loads of wares for sale. The Greeks were eager purchasers, and learned from the traders many improvements in their simple arts. Some Phœnicians settled among them. Eventually the Greeks acquired from their benefactors the art of alphabetic writing. This is the statement of Greek legend, and its truth is unquestionable, as may readily be seen by a comparison of the Greek alphabet with the Phœnician. The Greeks appear to have received fifteen letters at first, and to have added others later as they realized their need for these. Some of the added letters, it was claimed, were invented by the Greeks themselves, and we have the names of men to whom the invention of certain of these was ascribed. The stories of the added letters, however, are clearly unreliable.

Cadmus is the legendary hero who is said to have brought the precious letters into Greece. If so, the diffusion of the art of writing in Greece, as elsewhere, must have been very, very slow; for letters were not generally employed there for several centuries after the time in which Cadmus is supposed to have lived. The story of

Cadmus is mythical and weird, and evidently contains so little of truth that there is no dependence to be placed upon it. It is such a story as would originate only among uncultivated and imaginative people. Still it possesses some interest, and for this reason it is deemed worthy of a brief recounting here.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LEGEND OF CADMUS.

In ancient days there reigned in the Phœnician land a king named Age'nor, whose realm was prosperous, and who was peculiarly fortunate in his domestic life. About him grew up a family of brave sons and beautiful daughters, and the years of their youth passed away amid scenes of ideal happiness. Of the daughters there was one whose name was Euro'pa, and who possessed such charms of beauty and grace as might fascinate even the gods in whom the people believed. When she was in the bloom of her young womanhood a sad event occurred, which cast a deep shadow over the royal house.

One day the children of the king were in a meadow near the seashore, with their attendants, amusing themselves with simple pastimes, and thinking nothing of coming sorrow, when a beautiful animal left the flocks which were grazing near by, and drew near to the girls. It was a milk-white bull, tame and gentle, and of so perfect a form as to attract special attention. That it was not one of Agenor's cattle was not noted at the time, since he had many superb creatures among his herds. So gentle was the animal, and so winning in its manner, that the girls of the party came to have no fear of it, and gently stroked its glossy hair, admiring its beauty.

Upon Europa it seemed to exert a sort of fascination. It gazed at her lovingly, with a human expres-

sion in its eyes; and then it knelt down before her, as if to invite her to ride upon its back. Europa thoughtlessly acted upon the suggestion of its attitude, and sprang gaily upon the back of the animal, which then arose and began to bear her away. To the water it went, as if to end the damsel's ride, when, instead of stopping, it plunged boldly into the waves and swam very quickly away. Ere the wondering companions of the abducted maid could arrange to pursue them, the bull and its fair burden were out of sight; and neither the animal nor the princess was ever seen again in Phœnicia.

If this were all the story, it might be deemed a legendary account of an actual fact; for animals have often been ridden into the surf and overwhelmed by the waves. But there is a sequel to the narrative which is wholly incredible.

It was Zeus himself, the story tells, who had taken the form of a bull in order to steal Europa from her home. Zeus was the greatest of the Greek gods—the supreme divinity of heaven and earth. Inflamed by the beauty of Europa, he had determined to take her for a wife, though he had already more than one spouse.

This story illustrates the great difference between the Greek mythology and the Roman. The Jupiter of the Roman belief was a being of lofty character, godlike in wisdom, in power, and in virtue. The Zeus of the Greeks was a despicable being, distinguished especially for disgraceful intrigues with women.

The story relates that the god, in his brute disguise, held on his way through the sea, nor ever stopped until

he reached the island of Crete, where he stepped upon the strand and deposited his lovely burden among the beautiful bowers by the shore. Here he assumed his accustomed form, which was that of a handsome man. He explained to the astonished girl his plan in the strange adventure. She was now wholly in his power, and yielded to his wishes, becoming his earthly bride.

The story of the abduction of Europa has often been told in charming style by writers of prose and of verse. The following account, from Darwin's "Botanic Garden," Canto II, is one of the best:

"Now lows a milk-white bull on Asia's strand,
And crops with dancing head the daisied land.
With rosy wreaths Europa's hand adorns
His fringéd forehead and his pearly horns.
Light on his back the sportive damsel bounds,
And pleased he moves along the flowery grounds;
Bears with slow steps his beauteous prize aloof,
Dips in the lucid flood his ivory hoof;
Then wets his velvet knees, and wading, laves
His silky sides amid the dimpling waves.
Beneath her robe she draws her snowy feet,
And, half reclining on her ermine seat,
Around his neck her radiant arms she throws,
And rests her fair cheek on his curléd brows.
Her yellow tresses wave on wanton gales,
And bent in air her azure mantle sails;
While her fair train with beckoning hands deplore,
Strain their blue eyes, and shriek along the shore.
Onward he moves; applauding Cupids guide,
And skim on shooting wing the circling tide;
Now Europe's shadowy shores, with loud acclaim,
Hail the fair fugitive, and shout her name."

Titian. THE ABDUCTION OF EUROPA

In honor of his beautiful bride, Zeus gave the name *Europa*, or *Europe*, to the vast region north of the Mediterranean Sea. Europa became the mother of three sons, one of whom—Sarpe'don—was a hero of the Trojan War, of whom you will read in the "Iliad" of Homer. Another, named Mi'nos, was the great law-giver of Crete, famed in old legends as one of the wisest and best of mankind. The third was Rhadaman'thus.

Whatever may have been the simple facts (if there were any) concerning the disappearance of Europa, the artists who have portrayed the legend have invested it with accessories of the supernatural. In the famous picture by Paul de Veronese there are three successive views of the abduction. In the foreground the maiden is seating herself upon the back of the bull; to the right the animal is entering the water with his fair rider; and in the distance the bull is swimming away, while Europa is waving an adieu to the people on the shore. In this picture there are suggestions of a bridal, and the attendants of the maiden seem aware of the impending miracle.

The famous picture by Albani, in the Uffizi palace at Florence, is very different in its conception of the scene; for in this, the attendants upon the shore—far from entering into the spirit of a joyous wedding—give evidence of their consternation and distress, seeming to behold nothing of the supernatural embellishments of the scene.

When Europa and the bull disappeared so suddenly from sight, there was consternation on the shore. The

king was informed of the strange circumstances of his daughter's abduction, and was inconsolable in his grief. He rent his clothes and lifted up his voice in piteous cries. The wife and mother, whose name was Telephas'-sa, likewise refused to be comforted.

All the stricken household seem to have believed that there was something miraculous, or supernatural, in the events related. The bull was but a manifestation of some superior power and intelligence. Perhaps, after all, Europa was still living, in some country to which she had been carried by her mysterious abductor. It was agreed that her brothers should search through the world in an effort to find and restore her.

The legend, it must be borne in mind, goes back to the time before the Phœnicians had traveled much upon or about the Mediterranean; before they had visited Greece; before they had even given the name *Phoenicia* to their own land. To them the great world was almost unknown.

Only the aged king remained at home. Telephassa accompanied her sons and their followers in their wanderings about the shores of the great sea. The disconsolate party traveled northward to what is now Asia Minor; but ere they reached it, one of the sons, named Phœ'nix, abandoned them, and resolved to remain in his home country, where, in course of time, he became a great ruler. It is said that the land of Phœnicia received its name from him. Ci'lix, the youngest brother, also abandoned the search somewhat later, and resolved to remain in Asia Minor. Here, it is said, he became great, and established a kingdom which received, in his

honor, the name of Cilicia. Only Cadmus remained of the three sons named, to accompany the undaunted mother; and he, with filial and brotherly love, continued the search. Finally Telephassa died, and Cadmus was left with his followers, including, perhaps, some younger brothers, to journey on. He passed over into Europe, and made his way to the Grecian states. Here he thought he had an opportunity to learn the will of heaven. There was at Delphi, in northern Greece, a celebrated oracle, which men visited from far and near, when they were perplexed with difficulties or in doubt as to their duty, and when they sought to know the future.

To Delphi went the weary traveler in the hope of receiving a message from heaven which would make his duty clear. The replies which were given by the priests at Delphi were often very strange, very irrelevant, very mysterious and uncertain. The word *Delphic* has become proverbial with us, signifying *obscure*.

The priests at Delphi claimed to receive the word of their god through the cries of an old woman who was rendered insane by breathing a kind of mountain gas which flowed through a cleft of rocks in the neighborhood. *Inspiration* means, primarily and literally, a drawing in of the breath. It was the *inspiration* of this gas which caused the *Pyth'ia*, as the old woman was called, to give utterance to the divine will. In a figurative sense we often use the words *inspired* and *inspiration* in our day, the figure being borrowed from the old story of Delphi.

The response of the oracle to the questionings of

Cadmus was most surprising and perplexing. It said nothing of Europa, nor of the old father, far away, nor of the brothers who had dropped out of the march. What it said was simply this:

"*Follow the cow, and build where she rests.*"

This would seem to be a rude and almost jocular answer to the agonized appeal of the wanderer. It appears to have been naturally suggested by Europa's strange adventure. This response was received as the utterance of deity; and the pious Cadmus, with followers whom he had brought with him, and with others who joined him from curiosity or love of adventure, started away through the wilderness to the eastward. Before they had gone very far they did, indeed, discover a cow, leisurely walking away in the same direction. They followed her for many miles; and when at last she lay down to rest, they marked the spot as the site for the citadel, or fortress, of a new settlement.

Here Cadmus built the city of Thebes, in the country known as Bœo'tia, in Greece. It was one of the oldest seats of civilization in the Grecian world, and the scene of many legendary, and some very notable historical events. It was the scene, moreover, of two of the most famous tragedies of old time—the "Antig'one" and the "Seven Against Thebes," both by Soph'ocles. It was the home of Pindar, the ancient lyric poet, and of that idol of the historians, Epaminon'das.

The Thebans were very proud of their ancient origin, and of their first king, the Cadmus of this story. For a long time, indeed, the city was called "Cadme'a," in his honor. To Cadmus the Thebans ascribed the in-

vention of the Greek alphabet. The more general statement concerning him is that he *carried* the letters from Phœnicia.

Readers of this volume who are fond of Thomas Hughes' famous book, "Tom Brown's School Days at Rugby," may have heard why this noted Englishman was called "Cadmus," or "Cad," in his school days. In one of his history lessons he was asked who Cadmus was, and he answered, with all confidence,—

"He was a postman, sir."

Astonished at such an answer, the master demanded to know the reason for it. And the pupil triumphantly pointed to the place in his history where it was said that Cadmus "carried letters into Greece."

It may easily have been that there was a man named Cadmus, who carried from Phœnicia the knowledge of many useful arts, including the art of alphabetic writing, and who settled at Thebes at some time in its early history. Of his time we really know nothing. The gratitude of posterity to such a character would lead naturally to exaggerated stories of his wisdom, his filial devotion, and his piety.

Assuming, then, that Cadmus was a real character and a benefactor to his people, it does not follow that his modification of the Phœnician alphabet for use by the Greeks was followed by any general acceptance and use of it for a long time after. Learning to read and write is a laborious process, and is now relegated to the years of childhood, when the learners have ample time to devote to it. People unaccustomed to continued mental effort, who acquire the art in the years

of manhood, find the task very arduous. In some of the countries of Europe to-day, a very large part of the population is wholly unlettered.

For a long time, doubtless, in Greece as in Phœnicia itself, the use of letters was restricted to the writing of brief memoranda of very important matters, and this work was performed by a few persons especially trained for the service. The employment of writing for literary purposes was doubtless a matter of long and slow development. The period generally assumed for the first use of alphabetic writing in Greece is not far from the First Olympiad, which was the year 776 B. C.

THE HERD.

A

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST LETTER.

What should be the first letter? What should be the subject of the picture to stand at the head of the new alphabet? This was the practical question which presented itself to the Phœnician alphabet maker of old.

Very naturally he chose that animal which was probably the earliest friend of man among the brute creation. He chose the ox, whose name, in his language, was *Aleph* (ah'lef). The name begins with a vowel sound, and this was to be the vowel letter.

From the earliest times we find the ox and the cow (*Aleph* included both sexes) the companion of civilized man. Centuries before the horse was domesticated, the ox was harnessed to the plow, as he is to-day in many lands. By the aid of that faithful helper the wildernesses were subdued, and made to blossom. Healthy and wholesome, he supplied nutritious meat. The cow gave her inestimable treasure of milk.

As in the days of barbarism, this animal continues to be one of the most valuable possessions of man in his state of highest civilization. The beef interests and the dairy interests of the most advanced nations of to-day, in their enormous magnitude, show how necessary are the ox and the cow to man. By the peasantry in some countries the cow is regarded with affection as a member of the family. In the villages of France it is

crowned with flowers and led in a procession on Easter day. One of the most pathetic poems in the French language is the one by Delavigne entitled "*La Vache Perdue*"—The Lost Cow. And one of the most famous of European melodies is the "*Ranz des Vaches*"—the Calling of the Cows, a song of the Swiss peasants.

It was not necessary to draw the full picture of the animal in order to form the letter. The head was deemed sufficient; and a rude outline of the head of an ox was drawn for the first letter. If the eyes and nostrils were marked in the outline at first (as probably they were), they were soon dropped, and the picture was drawn in the rudest way, thus:

Even in this rude outline we can see clearly the horns, the ears, the nose, and the general figure of the head.

A slant of the characters was inevitable when men wrote rapidly and carelessly, and soon the top of the head began to appear at a decided angle to the right. The cross-bar was more and more carelessly made, and sometimes the ears were left very short. More and more was the letter tipped over, as generations came and went; and now the head of the ox is seen standing

on its horns—straight upside-down. The nose of the poor animal has been sharpened to a point, and the ears are wholly wanting. Yet in our *A* we can still see the evolution from the original picture. We have put tips on the animal's horns, as a slight compensation for the loss of his ears.

When the Greeks learned to make this letter, they probably did not notice that it had ever been the picture of an ox's head. They did not know the meaning of the word *Aleph*. When they tried to pronounce it, they called it *Alpha*. The name, however, is not wholly a stranger even to us. Let us call it *Eleph* (since the Phœnicians seem not to have been very particular about their vowel sounds), and we have the word *elephant*—all but three letters, which have been added. This is a very old word, and has passed through various languages. An elephant was by the ancients, no doubt, deemed a sort of gigantic ox. The Greeks were particular about their vowels, and did not use this letter loosely, for a variety of sounds, but gave it the sound of *A* in our word *father*. The Romans did the same, and discarded the old name, calling the letter by its simple sound.

In our alphabet this letter has eight regular sounds, as recognized in Webster's "International Dictionary." It is worthy of note that the test of elegance in speaking English is found in the sounds of our vowels, and especially in the obscure sounds. The latter must not be rendered emphatic, for thus they will be no longer obscure. Some of the refinements of our speech are not perceptible to an uncultivated ear. What is called final

A (*A* at the close of an unaccented syllable) is often confounded by foreigners with the sound of *U* in *up*, which it nearly approaches. Perhaps you have heard the word *machine* pronounced much as though it were *mush-een* by those who were simply unable to detect the slight difference.

It was not only the nations to the west of the Phœnicians that borrowed the Phœnician alphabet. The Jews, to the eastward, copied it in its entirety. While the Jews were a kindred people, and spoke a language much the same as that spoken in Sidon and Tyre, they developed it very differently. The Phœnicians, caring for nothing but trade and money-making, gave little attention to literature. Their writings were chiefly of a business nature. Like many men of to-day who are engrossed in business affairs, they saw no reason why men should love poetry and should bestow much study upon its expression in elegant enunciation. To them, the vowel sounds were of slight consequence, so long as the words containing them were understood.

The Jews, on the other hand, possessed a literature of wonderful beauty and power, which was largely poetical. The writings of their prophets and kings were deemed sacred, as inspired of God. Reverence and a cultivated taste for literature in its higher forms led them to read "The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings," with becoming care as to purity and propriety of expression. In the course of time they found it necessary to have definite vowels, to preserve the variety of vowel sounds which they had developed. They ultimately added to the alphabet a system of vowel marks,

to be written under or over the *Aleph*, to indicate the exact sounds it was to represent in the various words in which it was used. These vowel marks, which came into use long after the time of Christ, were inserted much as the stenographer of to-day inserts vowels in her shorthand writing, after she has drawn the consonants of a word. They were afterwards applied to other letters than *Aleph*, as we shall see later on. The Greeks and Romans did not copy these vowel marks, since they had adapted letters of the alphabet to represent vowel sounds.

Until the vowel marks were added, the Jews could know what vowel sound was to be given only by hearing the word spoken. If for any reason a word of their language should not be spoken for generations, they could not be sure from its written form what sounds its vowels were intended to have. Such a case would not seem likely to happen; and yet it did happen, in the case of a very important word, as will be related in another chapter.

As it was perhaps three thousand years ago, so to-day, the *Aleph* stands at the head of the alphabet. The Romans, who received it from the Greeks, under the name of *Alpha*, called it, simply, *Ah*. With them, as with the Greeks, it always represented essentially the same sound, though its utterance might be longer or shorter in different words. In most modern languages there is but little variation in the sound of the letter.

We call it *A*, naming the letter from what we call its long sound. This, however, is a sound which it never possessed in Latin. It is a sound almost peculiar to our

language, and very difficult for foreigners to acquire, for it is accompanied with what the orthoëpists call the "*vanishing E*" sound.

Ask a pupil to give the long sound of *A* slowly. He will begin it with the mouth open; but ere he concludes, his lower jaw will rise, and the sound will be changed into the sound of *E*, or will approach it very nearly. If he will keep his mouth open all the time while he is uttering the sound, and will not raise his tongue, he will utter the sound as our ancestors did ages ago, before they had acquired the "*vanishing E*," and as the Irish are apt to utter it to this day.

It is significant of the high culture of the English-speaking peoples that they possess so many carefully distinguished sounds, attributed to this one letter. To master the *A*, so as to give, without affectation or self-consciousness, all the shadings of sound which it represents, is to acquire a very important accomplishment in vocal training.

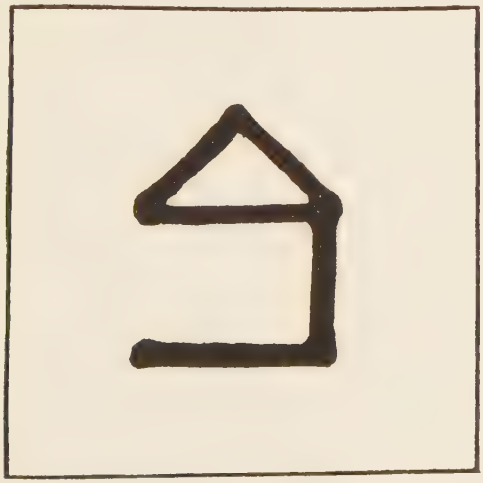
B

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOUSE.

The second letter of the old alphabet was *Beth* (baith). The word signified *house*, and doubtless carried with it the idea of home.

There is no race of people in the world to whom the idea of home is dearer than it is to the English-speaking nations, or by whom an emblem of home should be more cherished. The original letter was, of course, a picture of a house. The drawing was rude; however, it was sufficiently definite to give us some idea of the kind of house the alphabet-maker had in mind. It was like this:



We see the roof, the floor, and one of the walls. Since the side presented to us is not filled in by the artist, we cannot speak as to the windows. What we note more particularly is that the house was wholly open in front. In the dry countries of the Orient, where it is very warm, the houses are apt to be built in this way. The front may be closed by a curtain or a screen, when desired, or the interior may be left open to the light and air. In Japan screens are almost universally employed, since they can be shifted with ease at any time.

The Jewish letters, as they have come down to us, differ materially from the earlier Phœnician forms. The Jewish *Beth* is fashioned thus:

So far as this may be said to represent a house, it evidently depicts a flat-roofed dwelling. Whatever form of roof the early Phœnicians may have possessed, in their more humid coast region, the flat roof was typical of the interior, as, indeed, of the Orient generally.

In the name of the first letter we recognized an old friend—the word *elephant*, somewhat shortened. In the second letter's name we behold another. Since the Phœnician vowel was indefinite, let us call the word *booth* —as we have been calling it for centuries. Our word *booth* has a somewhat indefinite meaning, since we do

not live in booths, but in substantially built houses. With us a booth is usually a temporary structure, with only curtains or screens for its sides—such a building as is erected for some special purpose at a fair, or such a compartment as is screened or curtained off in a voting place.

So the old word in its long travels has come down to us, bearing still some idea of its ancient use, and giving us some idea of the home of the ancient Phœnicians. It is familiar to us in combination with other ancient words which are found in the Scriptures; as, *Bethel* (house of God), *Bethlehem* (house of bread), etc.

When men first wrote, they probably employed the left hand for this purpose. At all events, they wrote from right to left; and the Hebrew books and newspapers are printed in that manner even at this time. The Greeks wrote from left to right, as we do; and they very naturally reversed the letters that were reversible.

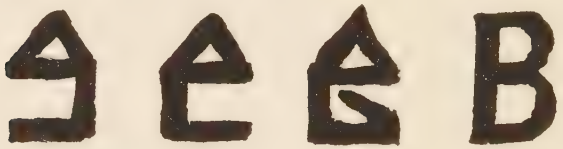
Thus the Greek scribe turned the open side of the house to the right when he drew the picture to form the letter *Beth*. Moreover, he fell into a way of giving an upward and inward stroke to his brush when he came to the outer end of the floor. Thus the letter came to consist of two triangles.

Yet it is probable that the Greeks did not recognize in it the picture of a house; nor did they quite succeed in catching its name, when they acquired the letter. The name meant nothing to them. They called it *Beta* (ba'ta).

Now, if you will combine the Greek names of the first two letters, you will meet another old friend—the word *alphabet*, which is slightly shortened from the *Alpha-Beta* of the Greeks. The Romans shortened the name of the second letter, and called it *Be* (bay).

The Greeks were very fond of curved lines, and they soon modified the letter by rounding the triangles and straightening the line on the left.

The ancient forms assumed by Beth in its gradual transformation seem to have been as follows:



In English we give but one sound to the letter *B*, and of this little need be said. Our sound of the letter, however, is much stronger than the one given to it in some other languages. In uttering it we press the lips tightly together, and then explode the sound. The Spanish do not do this. They permit the lips to touch but lightly, and their sound of the letter is, in consequence, so feeble that it is often mistaken for the sound of *V*.

The Cubans, who speak Spanish, spell the name of their capital city *Habana*, but we always call it Havana. The name of Servia is likewise often written *Serbia*.

The Jews came to make use of both the strong sound and the feeble sound of this letter, in different words;

and, in order to distinguish them, they indicated the strong sound by placing a round dot in the letter.

There has been much confounding of the sounds of *B* and *V* in various lands, and for a very long period of time. The sounds of the two letters are, after all, much alike, unless the *B* is pronounced with the peculiar explosive force which we give it in speaking English. In the modern Greek the *Beta* has the sound of our *V*.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CAMEL.

For the third letter a favorite animal of the ancient world was chosen. This was the camel, the famous "ship of the desert."

It must not be imagined that all the trading of the Phœnicians with foreign nations was conducted by means of ships and water-ways. Great caravans of camels came down from the kingdoms of Asia Minor on the north, and up from Egypt on the south, and across from Persia and perhaps from India on the east. Their burdens of precious sacks and baskets were unloaded at the doors of the warehouses of Sidon and Tyre. And when the patient beasts and their drivers were rested, new burdens of the costly products of the Phœnicians were placed upon the backs of the kneeling camels, and the long trains of desert-crossing animals and men took up again their line of march, thus helping to carry on the great trade of the never-satisfied world.

Fitted is the camel for the privations and the toils of the long desert marches. His extra stomachs serve as a reservoir for water, when springs and rivers are far, far apart. His hoof is peculiarly fitted to tread the yielding, burning sand. His hump is a wad of fat, held in reserve to be drawn upon for his life force, in case his food shall fail him.

Very valuable in the Orient, the camel is of little use elsewhere. To the northern and western nations he is simply a curiosity—a tenant of parks and zoological gardens, or a part of the collections of menageries. Yet no one looks upon the camel without a certain feeling of affectionate interest. He is associated in the mind with Bible stories and with Bible lands. He has been so patient, so useful, so helpful to man in advancing civilization, that we honor him for the great work he has done, though we realize that he is useless to us, and that his great work in the world is well-nigh accomplished.

The world of the future, with its railways in the East, will need the camel less and less, and the day is approaching when, after his thousands of years of toilsome service, he will enter into his long rest.

The Phœnician name for this good beast was the forerunner of our own name for him. Their word *Gimel* (ghe'mel), or *Gamel* (gah'mel) has been changed into *camel*, in the course of long ages. The Phœnicians distinguished carefully between the hard sound of *G* and the sound of *K*. When they were dealing with consonants, indeed, they could be particular in making distinctions. The Greeks, who adopted the letter, made the same distinction. They copied the letter *Gimel*, and corrupted its name into *Gamma*. But the Romans, who borrowed the letter, did not, at first, make this distinction at all. Perhaps the difference is not great in the final sounds of our words *bag* and *back*, but we are educated to note it very clearly—much more

clearly than our German friends do. The Romans, in copying the letter for use in their Latin language, gave it both sounds, probably without noticing the difference between them. Long afterwards, when they had become more cultivated, they made the distinction, and indicated the different sounds by making slight differences in the letter. Thus it came that they had both *G* and *C* (which letters are much alike), both letters being formed from the original *one*. To *C* they never gave our soft sound.

As a result of the old Roman disregard of the distinction mentioned, we are in doubt as to some of the old Roman names. Cæsar, for instance, was of a very ancient family. We are not certain whether his first name was *Caius* or *Gaius*.

Those who have read General Wallace's great novel "Ben Hur" have noted with what care he pictures the camel; for his description is written with an artist's regard for all the details, in which he shows a deep interest.

The picture drawn by the Phœnician alphabet maker was very rude and hasty. All he designed to do was to represent the sound with which the name of the animal began. He drew, with some little care at first, a silhouette of the animal's head and a part of its long neck. Since the length of its neck and the absence of any horns would prevent its being mistaken for any other animal he did not need to be very careful in his drawing. Probably he made his picture at first somewhat like the illustration on the following page.

Later, as the writing became more careless and more rapid, the letter was little more than the representation of an angle, being made thus:

When the change in the direction of writing was made, and men began to write lines from left to right, the head of the animal was turned in the opposite direction, so that he might seem to be traveling with the writer's hand. The Greeks, who saw no picture in the letter, made it thus:

The tendency of all the old writers was to change angles into curves; and the Romans curved and ex-

tended the figure until it became more than half a circle, with the opening to the right. Later on, to distinguish the *G* sound from the *K* sound, they added a little bar below the opening.

Unfortunately, we have given to both *C* and *G* soft sounds, as well as the original hard sounds. This has caused much confusion. But if we should now attempt to correct the old mistakes that were made in spelling and pronouncing, we should soon fail to recognize the forms of old words; and while we might restore the old pronunciation, or make our modern spelling more phonetic and consistent, we should lose the continuity of the old words, and should not know whence we had obtained them.

Mistakes which have been long followed, and have become a part of the established usage of a people, are difficult to correct. Generally it is better not to attempt this. And it is for this reason that we are the more disposed to put up with many of the inconsistencies and absurdities of our spelling of to-day. We take into consideration the circumstances which have caused them, and view them from the standpoint of orthographical history, and not from the standpoint of original principles in spelling and pronunciation.

CHAPTER X.

THE DOOR.

In the next letter we shall recognize an old friend in the form of a familiar word. This is the word *delta*, which we met in our geographies. When the Greeks adopted this letter they corrupted its name, *Daleth* (dah′-leth), into *Delta*, and the word has come down to us directly from them. The letter was simply a triangle, made thus:

The name meant *door*. Now, a triangle would represent the door of a tent, as you will readily see. But it would not represent the door of any modern building.

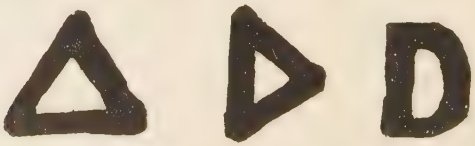
The Phœnicians, while accustomed to the tents of the caravans which were constantly visiting them, did not themselves live in tents. But the tent must have been to them a familiar object at all times. When the end of the caravan's journey was reached, the tents of the merchants and their camel drivers were spread, and the company rested while the bargains were driven with those shrewd Yankees of the East, the Phœnician merchants and manufacturers.

Further, you will remember that the house depicted in the letter *Beth* was only a sort of *booth*, with an

open front, which might be closed with curtains or screens. And doubtless any partitions which divided the interior into rooms were often made of the same materials. A door through a curtain would be made in the same manner as a door in a tent, by pinning back, in some way, two breadths of the curtain.

The writer is inclined to think that our letter *D*, in script form, as it is written by many to-day, is more like the original letter than any other that we have. Probably those who made the Greek triangle began at the top, and followed down first the left side; then made the bottom line and the right side; and not being careful in regard to the lower angle to the right, made a sharp curve instead. When a writer makes a script *D* thus, as many do, he is doubtless forming the letter much as it was formed, by many at least, twenty-five hundred years ago.

In making this letter with a careless slant, the Phœnicians sometimes tipped it to the left, so as to render the first line of it perpendicular. In this form it chanced to come into use by the Romans; and when they gracefully rounded the angle to the right into an even curve, the letter assumed the form which it retains in our alphabet. The progressive changes are thus shown:



In the most ancient name of this letter, which carries us back through thousands of years, we may find a

word familiar to us all. Drop off the last three letters of *Daleth*, and change the sound of *L* to that of *R*, as in our word *colonel*. Then you will see the resemblance between this word and our word *door*, which is but a shortened and otherwise modified form of a very ancient word.

A special interest attaches to the letter *Daleth*, from the fact that Jesus, in one of his discourses, made use of its name as a symbol of himself. He said, "I am the door of the sheep;" and doubtless he used the Hebrew word *Daleth* when he spoke. Further, he said, "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

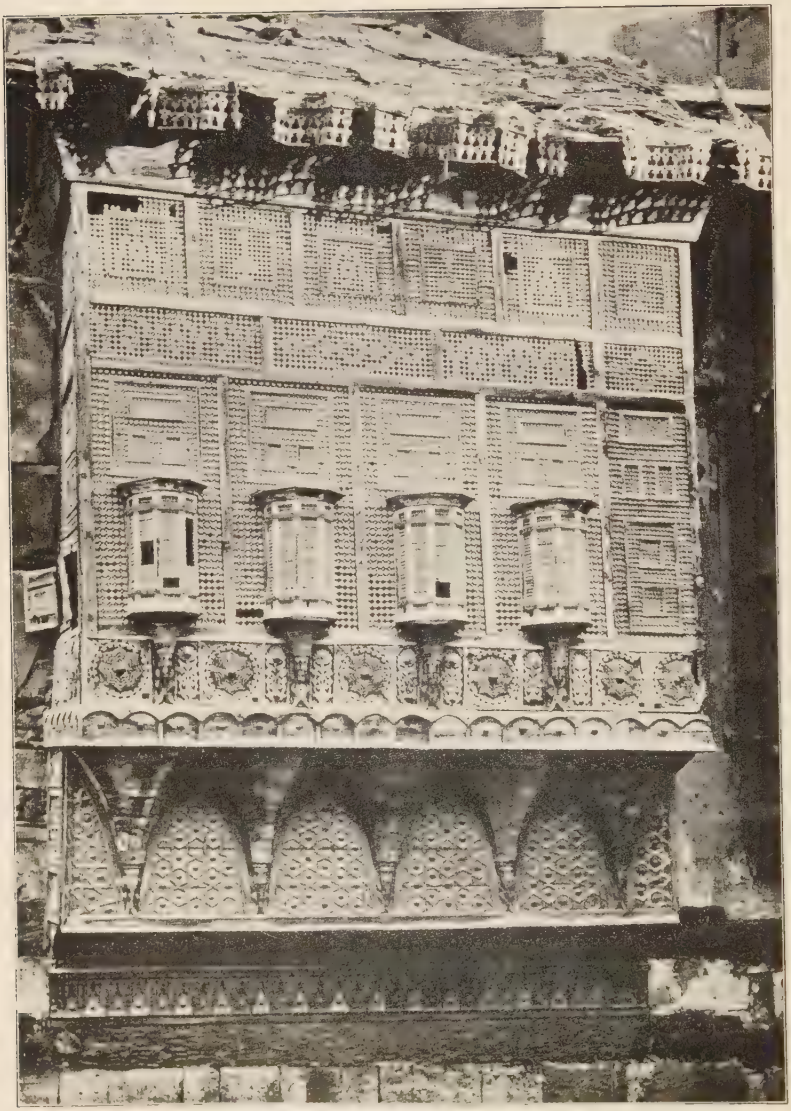
We have but one proper sound for the letter as it has come down to us; nor is it easy for us to conceive of any other sound for it. When we make the sound, we touch only the tip of the tongue to the roof of the mouth, and we expel the breath forcibly. Now if, instead of doing this, we press the whole fore part of the tongue against the roof of the mouth, and the teeth, and very lightly, we shall give the Spanish sound of the letter, which is somewhat like that of TH in *though*.

There was in the East a strong tendency toward this manner of giving the sound of *Daleth;* and the Jews came to distinguish between the two sounds, and to use both in different words. They indicated the difference by placing a round dot in the letter when they wished it to have the hard, forcible, distinct sound which we give it. Such refinements came, of course,

with a higher degree of culture, and with a desire for greater refinement and elegance in reading the sublime books which were the boasted possession of that people.

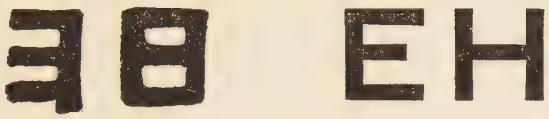
In addition to the proper sound of *D*, we substitute for it the sound of *T* in many words, as *walked*, *worked*, *strapped*, etc. In these words the terminal letters, *ED*, formerly constituted a separate syllable, and the *D* was given its proper sound. Long after the terminal was joined with the preceding syllable in ordinary conversation, the syllables continued to be pronounced separately in all formal discourse and in vocal reading. When we read old poems, like Spenser's "Faerie Queene," we are often obliged to make a separate syllable of the termination, in order to preserve the meter of the verse, as in the following line:

"By hunting and by spoiling liv-ed then."



Scene in Cairo.

ORIENTAL WINDOWS OF TODAY.



CHAPTER XI.

THE WINDOW AND THE FENCE.

The alphabet maker had now pictured a house and a door, and he turned his mind naturally to a window and a fence. Between these he placed a nail and a dagger, or short sword. But as the window and the fence are much alike, both in the pictures and in the sounds of the letters, it is most convenient for us to consider them together.

The window and the fence both represented aspirate sounds, such as we express by our letter *H*. What was the need for the two? Has not our *H* always the same sound? Essentially, but not quite. The Phœnician was particular when he came to consonant sounds, however careless he might be of his vowels. We do not always give the letter *H* the same degree of force. In such words as *hush* and *hundred*, we sound it rather harshly. In such words as *historical* and *harmonic* we sound it very lightly. In such words as *honor* and *herb*, we have long since ceased to sound it at all.

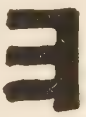
The Phœnicians took account of the harsher and the gentler aspirates, and invented a letter for each. So that they may be said to have had two *H's*. In fact, it is insisted that even the *Aleph* indicated a very slight breathing, though so little noticeable that we might not be able to detect it if the ancient words were

spoken now. The gentler aspirate, corresponding to our *H*, was called *He* (hay), and its representation was the picture of a window. The ancient windows were generally unlike our own, being closed with a lattice, rather than with glass.

The name meant *look!* or *see!*

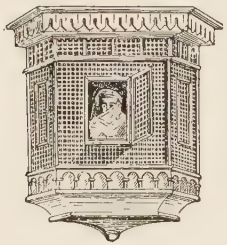
It was originally an interjection—an exclamation—to call the attention of the person addressed. If you were to step to a window to-day, to hail a passing newsboy or fruit-peddler, you would be very apt to call out, "Hey, there! Hey!" This is practically the same as it was thousands of years ago. "Hey!" cried people from the windows, or holes in the wall, and the exclamation gave its name to the window, and thus indirectly to the letter.

The Phœnicians formed the letter thus:



When it was turned around, in writing from left to right, it was almost exactly like our letter *E*, which has come down from it.

Since the ancient picture of the house was rudely drawn, without any detail of the side, and the building was but a booth, with an open or curtained front, we have from the drawings no very clear idea of the window. Especially in the upper stories of the higher buildings, windows were doubtless matters of much importance. And no doubt there were lighthouses in



Old Print.

SISERA'S MOTHER AT THE WINDOW.

the harbors, from the windows of which beacons were flashed at night over the dark sea to the sailors who were constantly arriving and departing.

A pathetic incident related in the Bible is associated with the lattice.

"The mother of Sisera looked out at a window and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?"—"The Book of Judges," V, 28.

Alas, poor heart! The mother of Sisera was never more to see her son.

The fence, which was called *Cheth*, (haith) represented a much stronger aspirate than our *H*, being somewhat similar to the *CH* of the Germans of to-day. The picture of the fence represented two fence posts, with three boards joining them. Its form was this:

Since neither the harsh nor the light aspirate was ever used without a vowel sound, the two aspirate letters became as certain an indication of a vowel as that singular letter *Aleph*, which was so indefinite. Unlike our *H*, these aspirates might be sounded either before or after the vowel.

The Jews, who were particular as to their vowels, eventually marked them in the words, above and below the letters, as stated in a previous chapter. Before the time when they did this, they carefully remembered

what particular vowel or vowels they were to use in any word. In one instance they refrained from pronouncing a certain word for ages. As a result, the time came when no one could remember what its vowel sounds were,—for no one was then living who had ever heard it spoken.

That word was the Jewish name of God. The reason why it had not been spoken was that it was deemed too sacred for human speech; and another word, meaning *master*, was reverently substituted for it wherever it appeared in a passage of Scripture that was read aloud.

The letters of this word were equivalent to our *JHVH*. Since the vowels were lost to the world, and *some* vowels had to be substituted in order that the word might be pronounced, the vowels *E*, *O*, and *A* have been inserted in the word in our Bible, and we call the word *Jehovah*. The vowels thus used are the ones contained in the Hebrew word for *master*, and may or may not be correct. There are some who think that there were but two vowel sounds, and that they were the sounds of our *A* and *E*. Accordingly, we sometimes find this word written *JAHVEH*. It would seem that this singular loss of the vowel sounds of a word was in the mind of the author of "The Book of Revelation" in the Bible, when he said:

"And he had a name written which no man knew but he himself."

The Greeks managed to do without any letter to represent the aspirate. Since the sound was a mere breathing, anyway, they indicated it by an inverted

apostrophe, which they did not consider a letter, properly, but merely a mark. Thus they had the *window* and *fence* letters of the Phœnicians to use for some other purposes. They had a sound similar to that of our long *A*, but without the "vanishing-*E*" sound, described in a preceding chapter. For this they chose the *Cheth*. But they omitted the upper and lower boards between the two fence-posts, and thus made it like our *H*. They called it *Eta* (a'ta). The Romans, when they borrowed it, gave it a mild aspirate sound, equivalent to our sound of *H*.

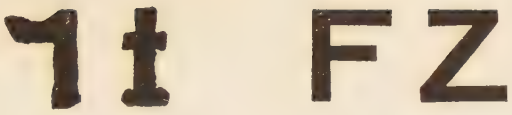
The Greeks had also a vowel sound similar to that of our short *E*. For this they used the *He*, transforming it into the shape of *E*. They called it *Epsilon*.* The Romans gave it our sound of long *A*, but without the "vanishing *E*," and with a quick utterance.

Now, when we Anglicize a Greek word, we often use our *E* to represent either the *Eta* or the *Epsilon* of the Greek. Right here we sometimes fall into confusion. It might be said that we should use our *A* to represent the Greek *Eta*, and our *E* only to represent the Greek *Epsilon*. But then we should fall into some difficulty again; for our *A* is used to represent the Greek *Alpha*, and thus we could not always be certain which it would represent—the *Alpha* or the *Eta*. We have but the two English letters to represent the three Greek letters. Our word *metropolis* is a Greek word Anglicized. We have simply written it—or tried to write it—in the English equivalents for the Greek letters. In this

*The name *Epsilon* was not used by the ancient Greeks, but dates from the middle ages.

word, does the *E* represent the Greek *Epsilon* or the Greek *Eta?* If the former, the word will mean, literally, *measure city;* if the latter, it will mean *mother city.* The latter is the true etymological meaning of the word; but the derivation is often misunderstood.

In our shading of the delicate sounds of *E* are found some of the severest tests of refinement and culture in speaking English. This refers, of course, to the obscure sounds, which must not be emphasized or brought out too strongly, for then, as has been said, they will be no longer obscure. If you listen to a carefully trained reader of English, you will note, perhaps, the delicate difference between the sounds of the vowels in the words *merge* and *urge;* and the words *fern* and *urn.* Very many persons disregard this difference. Others, in the endeavor to make it emphatic, betray an affected and unnatural pronunciation, which is disagreeable. It is a difficult matter to acquire perfectly the most refined distinctions of vowels in a language in which these are so delicately shaded as they are in English.



CHAPTER XII.

THE NAIL AND THE DAGGER.

Between the window and the fence letters of the Phœnicians came the nail and the dagger, as has been stated.

The letter *Vav* (vahv) was the picture of a nail or a hook. It was a long nail that was represented; and if it was made of iron it could be easily made into a hook by curving and sharpening it.

Vav was formed thus:

The Hebrew form of the letter was still more like a nail, being made thus:

Of the immense value of the nail to civilization it is unnecessary to speak. This simple instrument might be taken as a symbol of architecture. It was indispensable in ship-building. In the Bible this ordinarily beneficent and harmless thing is strangely associated with torture and death. Many centuries before the

Saviour of men was nailed to the cross, this instrument was employed in a tragic deed which the world remembers with interest. The story of Sisera, whose mother we saw in the last chapter, looking out at the window and crying through the lattice for her son, is told in "The Book of Judges," in these words:

"But Barak pursued after the hosts unto Harosheth of the Gentiles, and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword, and there was not a man left. Howbeit, Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me. Fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle. And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.

"And she opened a bottle of milk and gave him drink and covered him. Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No. Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a nail of the tent and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground, for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. And behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him and said unto him: Come and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into

THE DEATH OF SISERA.

her tent behold Sisera lay dead and the nail was in his temples."

Vav had the sound of our letter *V*. The Greeks did not adopt this consonant.* They had no sound in their language requiring it, though their sound of *Beta*, or *Beth*, as previously stated, may have approached this. In the modern Greek, as it is spoken today, the *Beta* is equivalent to our *V*, as we have seen.

Zayin (zah'yin) was the word for *dagger*, or *short sword*. The letter of this name was formed thus:

It seems to show the whole handle, but only a part of the blade of the weapon.

The Phœnicians were famed for their manufacture of arms. Daggers and falchions, with ornamented handles and deadly blades, were made of bronze, and sold to the neighboring nations.

The beautiful Judith, who rescued her people by slaying the tyrant Holofer'nes, may have used a Phœnician falchion. Her story is related in "The Book of Judith," in the Apocrypha; and we should all do well to read it carefully, since she is one of the world's great heroines in literature and in art. Some artists represent her as carrying a heavy and richly ornamented sword. She is portrayed in sculpture and in

*A Greek *vowel* called *Upsilon* (u-psilon'), may have taken its form from this letter. It is described in a later chapter, in connection with "The Eye." From this have been derived our *U*, *V*, and *Y*.

painting; and Thomas Bailey Aldrich, within recent years, has added to the literature relating to her a famous poem entitled "Judith and Holofer'nes."

A famous story of a dagger is to be found in "The Book of Judges," Chapter III. Eglon, an ancient king of Moab, conducted a successful war of conquest against the Children of Israel, whom he ruled for a period of eighteen years. At length a deliverer of his people arose in the person of Ehud, a left-handed man. In the words of Scripture the story is thus simply told:

"And by him the Children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon, the king of Moab. But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh. And he brought the present unto Eglon, king of Moab; and Eglon was a very fat man. And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present. But he himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king; who said "Keep silence." And all that stood by him went out from him. And Ehud came unto him: and he was sitting in a summer parlor, which he had for himself alone: and Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat. And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly."

Thus fell the foreign oppressor; and thus the Hebrews, like the early Romans, possessed a left-handed hero.

The Greeks made use of the *Zayin*, which they called *Zeta* (za'ta), and which they sounded somewhat harshly, as if it were a combination of *D* and *Z*, as in our word *adz*. For some reason this letter was moved along to the very end of the Roman alphabet, and it is the last letter of our own. In England the letter is called *Zed*. In America it was formerly called *Izzard*, which was doubtless a corruption of "*S*-hard." The form of our letter *Z* bears little resemblance to the original picture of the dagger, or short sword. The short blade was soon broken off, leaving only the handle to be represented. This was made like a wide *H* turned upon its side. In order that they might form the entire letter rapidly and without lifting the brush, the Greeks began to give a slant to the perpendicular line, connecting it with the right end of the upper cross-bar and with the left end of the lower one. In later times the letter became better proportioned, being made wider in proportion to its height.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BASKET.

Following the fence—the harsh aspirate—comes the basket. At least, this seems to be the object represented, though there are other plausible explanations of the word and of the form of the letter.

With us the use of baskets has greatly declined, since the delivery wagon of the merchant has been relied upon to deliver merchandise to our homes. The old-time market-basket, however, was a very essential part of the household furnishings in American homes—as it is to-day in most countries of Europe.

Baskets are of all sizes and shapes, and are made of various materials. Those constructed of some kind of wicker-work are the most familiar. They combine lightness with strength—two very important qualities of a receptacle for burdens.

The name of the letter which may have represented the basket was *Teth* (taith). Many hold that this letter derived its name from an old word meaning or describing a serpent, and that its Hebrew form represents this reptile. Others say that it comes from a word meaning *to roll or twist together*, and suggests the manner in which baskets were made.

Heullant.

THE ANCIENT BASKET MAKER.

The Phœnician form was this:

It may have been the picture of a bale of goods, such as the Phœnicians packed away in their ships. Such a bale, or bundle, might be made by joining two round baskets together at the mouths, and tying or strapping them. The Hebrew form of the letter was this:

Certainly the Phœnician form has no resemblance to a serpent; and to the writer the Hebrew form seems clearly to depict a basket such as would be carried by a camel. It is capacious, and square at the bottom. Instead of having an arched handle, which would only be in the way, it has a single handle, at one side, to attach to a strap going over the back of the camel. The basket on the other side of the beast would have its handle on the opposite side.

Very busy must have been the basket maker of the old time, and precious the loads which were borne in the old baskets to and from the warehouses of Sidon and Tyre! An excellent painting by Heullant represents the ancient basket maker at his work.

The name *Teth* begins with the sound of *T*, and ends

with the sound of our old letter *Thorn*, of which you have read. In some way the Greeks reversed the order of the sounds; and then they added a vowel sound to the name—as usual. They called the letter *Theta* (tha′ta). They gave it the sound of our old *Thorn*, which we now represent by the digraph *TH*. The Romans had no such sound in their (Latin) language, and hence they made no use of the letter.

When they desired to reproduce in their Latin a Greek word containing the *Theta*, they substituted the digraph *TH* for that letter, exactly as we do.

The story of the infant Moses, committed to the frail "ark," or basket, made of bulrushes daubed with slime and pitch, amid the flags by the river's brink, has been the delight of children of many lands for thousands of years. History records no more romantic story than that of this babe in the basket in the ancient land of the Nile.

"And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pha′raoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.

"Then said his sister to Pharoah's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?

"And Pharoah's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.

Moses in the Basket.

"And Pharoah's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it.

"And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharoah's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water."

I J

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HAND.

The human hand and the human head are both represented in the alphabet. Strange to say, there are two letters given to each. The hand and the head are the noblest servants of the human soul. We should educate both the head and the hand. Manual training was of prime importance among the busy and ingenious Phœnicians. Every hand of the teeming population seemed to have its appointed task to perform. The training of the intellect meant more to the Jews; and while they by no means despised industry, they made large letters to represent the head, and drew the smallest one of all to depict the hand.

The name of the latter, the tenth in the alphabet, was *Yod* (yode). It has been proverbial in many lands as a very little thing. From its name we have derived our word *jot.*

> "Neither will they bate
> One jot of ceremony,"

says Shakespeare.

"Till heaven and earth pass," said Jesus, "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled."

We have even made a verb of the word, and we often say, "I will *jot* this down," meaning that we will make a little note of something.

THE HAND IN YOD AND KAPH.

The Phœnician form of the letter was this:

It represents the hand in profile, bent at the knuckles and at the wrist, and with the thumb pointed forward. This position of the hand is shown first in the illustration on page 119. The tiny Hebrew form, which is so proverbial, is this:

It is almost meaningless as a picture.

The letter *Yod* was deemed a consonant, though it seemed to occupy the border land between a consonant and a vowel, as it partook of the nature of both.

The Greeks, who loved to have their words end in a vowel sound, called the letter *Iota* and gave it the sound of our long *E*. The Romans used it to represent the same sound; and from them we obtained it, as our *I*.

When we use the letter before a vowel, it often has the force of a consonant, as in the last syllable of our word *Virginia*. However, we have considered it a vowel. The Romans came to recognize the slight distinction between its use as a consonant and as a vowel; and where its force was consonantal, as in the word *Iulius*, their later writers differentiated it into another

letter by making it longer; and the long form has become our letter *J*.

I and *J* were practically one and the same letter, and for a long time were written exactly alike in English.

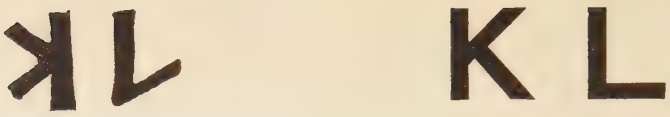
In some way, various modern peoples who received the *J* from the Romans have lost the original sound, and have substituted something very different. We retain the former sound in our word *hallelujah*, but we generally give the letter the disagreeable soft sound of *G*. The French and the Portuguese give it a more softened but still inelegant sound, which we represent by *S* in the word *embrasure*.

In Spanish, *J* represents a rather strong aspirate. This use of the letter has become familiar in the United States, owing to the fact that we have various names of cities that were Spanish in their origin; for instance, San Jose, San Juan, La Junta, etc.

For centuries the *J* and the *X* have been used interchangeably in the spelling of Spanish proper names with which we are more or less familiar, since the *X* may represent in Spanish the same aspirate sound. We are more accustomed to such spelling as *Mexico, Don Quixote, Xeres, Guadalaxara, etc.*, than to *Mejico, Don Quijote, Jeres, Guadalajara*, etc., because the former are the older forms; but the latter have generally the preference now, among the Spanish.

Yod is the initial of the name *Jesus*. It is unfortunate that a name so dear and so sacred is pronounced in a manner so different from that of the original word. The latter sounded very much as if it were Ya′ shoo-ah, and was agreeable to the ear.

Our sounds of *J* and hard *S* are the most disagreeable in our language, and they are both found in our pronunciation of this short name, although they did not exist in its original.



CHAPTER XV.

THE FIST AND THE WHIP.

In ancient days the world was governed largely by physical force. The great factories of Phœnicia, humming with their ceaseless industry, the ships ever loading and unloading at the ports, the caravans constantly arriving and departing,—all were controlled by forceful men, who exacted faithful service from man and beast.

Two letters of this old alphabet bring this forcibly to mind. The first of these was *Kaph*, the name of which signified *the hollow of the hand*, or *the palm*. Perhaps it meant also the hand bent so as to form a hollow—in other words, *the fist*.

The *Yod* was a clear picture in profile of a taper hand, gracefully inclined at the wrist and at the knuckles. *Kaph* was doubtless intended to represent the partly opened hand. It is probably a silhouette of a hand in the second position represented in the illustration on page 120. This position of the hand may have had some special significance, as indicating a command or a threat. The letter was formed in different ways, and at best is not a very satisfactory picture to us.

It was generally made about like this:

The Hebrew form of the letter was this:

However we may interpret the picture, the partly closed hand was evidently intended to be represented. The Hebrew letter seems to be a profile of the fist, presented in a threatening manner. With us the fist is a sort of a symbol of belligerency, and is suggestive of a fight or of a punishment. There must have been much occasion for the use of physical correction and coercion among the toilers of old Phœnicia, and doubtless the hand when bent was often a symbol of compulsion or of strife.

In "The Gospel According to St. Luke," Zacharias uses these words:

"That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies," etc.

And again, Jesus said:

"For the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men."

In other places, the same symbol is used to signify loving care and protection, as when we say that God preserves us "in the hollow of His hand."

When men began to write from left to right, the Phœnician letter was turned around, and took the form of *K*, which is the same in Greek as in Latin and English, having come all the way down to us with no considerable change of form. The original sound of the

letter must have been very similar to that of *K* in English.

The Greeks took the name *Kaph*, but did not quite catch the word as the Phœnicians uttered it, and they called it *Kappa*.

The Romans had no real need for this letter, since their *C* answered the same purpose, as we have seen. But they tardily adopted it for use in a few foreign words. We obtained the letter from the Romans, with no change in its form or in its sound.

Whatever may have been the idea of the alphabet maker in picturing the bent hand, there can be no question as to the significance of the next letter. It was a whip, or goad—a rod with a lash—to be used for the purpose of inflicting pain.

It was the cruel use of the lash upon the back of a Hebrew slave that caused Moses, the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, to enter upon his career as a liberator. Though he was identified with the dynasty of Egypt, he was so stung by the injustice done to one of his own people that he killed the taskmaster and left the country. When he returned, it was to liberate his people and to build up an independent nation.

The stones which form the mighty pyramids of Egypt were not drawn from the region of the upper Nile by beasts of burden, nor were they floated down the river on rafts. They were dragged through the mud by myriads of slaves, toiling under the lash of the oppressor.

In "The Book of Exodus" it is said:

"And the Egyptians made the Children of Israel to

THE SLAVERY IN EGYPT.

work with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service wherein they made them serve was with rigor."

The letter was formed thus:

In the picture illustrating the slavery in Egypt, the whip in the hand of the taskmaster happens to have the very form and position of the letter.

The name of the letter was *Lamed* (lah′ med). Its form in the Hebrew alphabet was more extended than in the Phœnecian, and represented the whiplash as longer, and bent backward. It was this:

The Greeks, of course, added a vowel to the name of the letter, and called it *Lambda* or *Labda.* They also turned it almost up-side-down, forming it like an inverted *V* (Λ). The Romans received the letter and its sound, and transmitted both to us. For some reason they adhered more closely to the original form of the letter than the Greeks did. We can see an *L* very plainly in the Phœnician letter.

It would seem that so simple a sound as that of *L* could not be easily confounded with that of any other

letter. Yet there has been a singular confounding of the sounds of *L* and *R*. Savages are very often unable to distinguish them. It was difficult, at first, to determine whether the old Hawaiian town was really Honolulu or *Honoruru*. The natives seemed to detect no difference between these forms of the word, and to use both in their speech.

In our word *colonel* we give the sound of *R* for that of *L*. The crockery manufactured in Majorca we call "Majolica." The old town at the mouth of the Tiber, which took its name from the river, became *Tivoli*. The interchange of sound between *L* and *R* in many lands and in various periods of time offers an interesting study to the philologist.

The reader will remember how we found our word *door* in the old word *Daleth*, the name of the fourth letter.

James.

THE WAVE.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SEA, THE FISH, AND THE ROCK.

"The sea, the sea, the open sea!
The blue, the fresh, the ever free!"

The Phœnicians loved the sea. More than any other nation of ancient days did they brave its perils. The Mediterranean was their highway of trade; and even the Atlantic did not appall them, as we have seen—for they sailed on its broad bosom "out of the world."

If in your writing you make the small letter *m* with the points above and the curves below (as many write it), you will be drawing a picture of the waves of the sea. This was much the way in which the Phœnicians depicted them in their letter *Mem* (*maim*), which was as follows:

The word meant "*the waters.*" A picture of three waves constituted the letter. We may be reminded of it whenever we see James' well-known painting of "The Wave."

It is singular that this letter has come down to us from ancient days in its script form, while even the Jewish neighbors of the Phœnicians changed it to a form which bears no resemblance to the surface of the sea. The Greeks, and then the Romans, accepted both the form and the sound of the letter, and these have been transmitted to us together.

A certain tragic scene of singular interest is associated in the mind with the letter *Mem*. It was in the great and proud city of Babylon, where Belshazzar reigned. It is described in the following passage from the Bible ("The Book of Daniel, V:1-6."):

"Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.

"Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.

"They drank wine and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

"In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

"Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."

It was the letter *Mem* in the Hebrew form, that the ghostly fingers first wrote upon the wall, to declare the doom of the wretched monarch. The words were written from right to left; and if there were two lines, the bottom line was written first.

Doré.

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.

"In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain."

"The Handwriting upon the Wall" is the subject of many noted pictures, and is proverbial throughout the world. Tragedy, mystery, and miracle combine to render the scene presented one of the most striking ever recorded or depicted.

The letter *Nun* (noon) followed *Mem.* Its name signified a fish; and the original forms represented a fish with a large head. The Phœnician picture is incomplete. It seems to represent the back and the open mouth of a fish. When the direction of the letter was reversed, the long line was drawn on the left side. In process of time, this was shortened. Singularly, the fish is always drawn perpendicularly, as if captured and hung upon a line or hook, and not as if swimming in the water.

It is just possible that this picture of the fish may once have contained a dot to indicate its eye. But the ox and the fish must have lost their eyes very early if they ever had them in the alphabetical representations, for only the outlines of the head are given in either letter, as found in the oldest inscriptions.

If the letter *Nun* ever contained the eye, its successive changes may be shown as follows:

It is impossible to say what particular fish, if any, was designated by the drawing. All sorts of fish were familiar to the alphabet maker, whose whole life was passed upon the sea shore. It was natural that the *fish* should follow the *waters* in the order of the alphabet, in obedience to that law of association which the minds of men unconsciously follow. Perhaps no attention was given to details which might identify the class or species. Any striking fish would answer the purpose.

The story of the prophet Jonah, and of the great fish which swallowed him, is very old; and doubtless it was often brought to mind by the letter *Nun*. Another strange story of a fish is to be found in the Apocrypha, in "The Book of Tobit." It is so weird that one who reads it will often be reminded of it, especially since it is associated with literature and art. This is the story: After the destruction of the Kingdom of Israel, when the Ten Tribes had been carried away into Assyria, a pious Jew named Tobit, who had been generous with his means, came to poverty and lost his sight. In his distress, he resolved to send his son Tobias, then a young man, to a far-off city to seek a distant kinsman to whom Tobit, in the days of his prosperity, had given money. Strangely enough, an attractive young man (who proved to be an angel in disguise) appeared upon the scene and tendered his services as a companion and guide for the son, who was timid and distressed. Together the young men journeyed, and on their way they met with the following experience:

Dore.

TOBIAS AND THE ANGEL.

"And as they went on their journey, they came in the evening to the river Tigris, and they lodged there. And when the young man went down to wash himself, a fish leaped out of the river and would have devoured him. Then the angel said unto him, Take the fish. And the young man laid hold of the fish and drew it to land. To whom the angel said, Open the fish, and take the heart and the liver and the gall, and put them up safely.

"So the young man did as the angel commanded him; and when they had roasted the fish they did eat it; then they both went on their way, till they drew near to Ecbatane. Then the young man said to the angel, Brother Azarias, to what use is the heart and the liver and the gall of the fish? And he said unto him, Touching the heart and the liver, if a devil or evil spirit trouble any, we must make a smoke thereof before the man or woman, and the party shall be no more vexed. As for the gall, it is good to anoint a man that hath whiteness in his eyes, and he shall be healed.

"And when they were come near to Rages, the angel said to the young man, 'Brother, today we shall lodge with Raguel, who is thy cousin; he also hath one only daughter, named Sara; I will speak for her that she may be given thee for a wife. For to thee doth the right of her pertain, seeing thou only art of her kindred."

But Tobias had heard a dreadful story to the effect that the maiden had been given in marriage before, no less than seven times; and that the seven successive

bridegrooms had died on entering her chamber on the eve of the wedding. Tobias told his companion this; but the latter replied:

"She shall be given thee to wife; * * and when thou shalt come into the marriage chamber, thou shalt take the ashes of perfume, and shalt lay upon them some of the heart and liver of the fish, and shalt make a smoke with it; and the devil shall smell it, and flee away, and never come again any more; but when thou shalt come to her, rise up both of you, and pray to God which is merciful, who will have pity on you, and save you; fear not, for she is appointed unto thee from the beginning; and thou shalt preserve her, and she shall go with thee."

Tobias did as his companion had directed. He made a smoke of the heart and liver of the fish on the eve of his wedding; and the demon who had killed his predecessors fled away, and there was peace and joy in the household.

The young man, with his bride and with a bountiful supply of money, returned to his home. His father was restored to sight by means of the gall of the fish. Then the guide, revealing himself as the Angel Gabriel, ascended in glory to heaven.

A great painting by Gustave Doré represents the angel winging his way heavenward, before the wondering eyes of the household to which he had brought so much happiness.

More than any other animal has the fish been associated with folklore of a marvelous character, until "a

fish story" has become the proverbial designation of a narrative incredible or highly improbable.

The Greeks received the letter *Nun* from the Phœnicians, the Romans from the Greeks, and our ancestors from the Romans, in the regular order.

Except in its nasal variation, our sound of this letter is simple and unvarying. The nasal sounds of the letter are a source of some difficulty in the study of certain modern languages, notably the French and the Portuguese. There is a popular opinion that the nasal sound of this letter in French is equivalent to that of our *NG* in the word *song;* and we sometimes see the French name *Constantin* marked to be pronounced by English-speaking pupils as if it were spelt *Cong-stong-tang*. The fact is that the French nasal sounds include no equivalent for our sound of *NG*. Indeed, this nasal sound of ours is as difficult for a Frenchman to imitate as his nasal sounds are for us. Our dictionaries no longer offer our combination *NG* as an equivalent for the *N* of a French nasal, but have found another way of representing the latter.

The next letter was called *Samech* (sah′mek). The word meant a *support*, or *foundation*. The Phœnicians drew it in this manner, to indicate, perhaps, a pillar, or post:

In the Hebrew alphabet it was formed thus:

While the name does not indicate the material of the foundation, it would seem to be a block of stone, hewn into shape. The Phœnicians had a keen sense of the value of a substantial foundation. Their city of Tyre, which jutted out into the sea, was built upon a rock, against which the billows of the Mediterranean beat in vain. Rocks abounded along the coast, and supplied materials for building purposes.

There is poetry, united with strong practical sense, expressed in this letter *Samech.* We are reminded by it of a parable taught by Jesus in his "Sermon on the Mount," when He said:

"Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock."

The sound of the letter was a soft sibilant, doubtless somewhat different from the sound of our *S.* Probably the Greeks made from it their letter *Ksi* (kse), which occupies the same place in their alphabet, and from which the Romans derived their *X*, which has come down to us. As previously remarked in this book, we have really no need for our *X*, since it is practically only a combination of *K* and *S.*

CHAPTER XVII.

THE EYE.

The eye, the noblest feature of the human face, the "window of the soul," was the subject of the next letter. Its name was *Ayin* (ah′ yin), which, if we drop the last syllable, is almost the same as our word *eye*. In its form the letter was generally a circle, though sometimes it was elliptical. If it ever contained a central dot, to represent the pupil, that has not come down to us.

It is not possible to determine exactly what sound this letter represented in ancient days, though it seems to have been a guttural, or throat sound, of some sort. It was the initial letter of the name of that wicked City of the Plain which we call Gomorreh, and which together with Sodom, was destroyed by a rain of fire from heaven, as related in the Bible. But evidently it had not our sound of *G*. Some identify it with a peculiar sound of the Arabs, which seems like a rolling *RG*. Others claim that its sound was light and soft, being somewhat of an aspirate. The Phœnicians, however, were so well supplied with aspirates, with their *He* and their *Cheth*,—to say nothing of their *Aleph*,—that an additional one would not seem to have been needed. At the present time, in reading Hebrew, the letter is generally regarded as silent, though we may be sure that it was not always so.

Whatever may have been its original sound, the

Greeks did not possess this; and hence they had no use for the letter in its original character. However, they were much in need of letters for their vowel sounds; and so they took the circle and used it for an *O*. Later, they needed another *O*, and so varied the letter as to make two of it. They also formed another letter (from which the Romans made two), which perhaps was suggested by the Hebrew form of the *Ayin*, though it may have come from *Vav*. Thus four letters may have been developed from this Phœnician letter, three of which have come down to us,—and one of these has been made into two. Let us first consider the *O's* of the Greeks. They had one which is called *O'micron*,* the name signifying "*little O*." The other is called *O'mega*, which means "*great-O*." The latter was, in some way, moved down to the very end of the Greek alphabet; and this reminds us of the words of the Bible:

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."

Of course, the two *O's* of the Greeks indicated, respectively, short *O* and long *O*. The Romans made one letter answer for both, and so do we.

There is, however, a peculiarity about our long *O* which was not known to the Romans. As we pronounce the letter, we give it what is called the "vanishing *OO*" sound. You will remember what was said about the "vanishing *E*" sound of our long *A*. The two instances of "vanishing" sounds are somewhat

*The names *Omicron* and *Omega* were not used by the ancient Greeks, but came into use in the middle ages.

similar in the manner of their production. If you ask a person to give the sound of long *O*, he will open his mouth rather wide at the beginning, but will begin to elevate the lower jaw; and ere he finishes, he will be giving the sound of *OO*.

The Irish have preserved the ancient vowel sounds in a marked degree. When an Irishman says,

"Take the boat,"

he sounds the *A* without the "vanishing *E*" and the *O* without the "vanishing *OO*." By holding the mouth open in giving the sounds of these vowels, we can imitate him, and thus reproduce the sounds of the ancient world. The Hebrew form of the letter *Ayin* was very different from that of the Phœnicians; yet neither of these bore a close resemblance to the human eye, which is not circular. Even when the Phœnicians made the letter in a flattened form, they drew an ellipse, without angles, or "corners," at the sides. The eyes of fishes and of many birds are really circular, and so is the pupil of the human eye; and for these, at least, the Phœnician circle would answer very well. If the Phœnicians were ever poetically inclined, they might think of the sun as the eye of day, and the moon as the eye of night. Probably they often did so think of the heavenly orbs, when far out at sea and beyond the reach of human eyes.

It is to be noted that there are but few curves in all the Phœnician alphabet. Even the whiplash of the *Lamed* stands out stiffly from the whip-stock.

The Hebrew form of the letter *Ayin*, for some unexplained reason, took the form shown on page 148.

Possibly it was from this form of *Ayin* that the Greeks took their *Upsilon*,* which resembled our *Y*—though its upper lines were curved, and not straight.

From the Greek *Upsilon* the Romans derived both their *U* and their *Y*.

In a Greek word written in the English equivalents of its letters, sometimes our *U* is used, and sometimes our *Y*, to represent the Greek *Upsilon*. Probably you have noticed this confusion of the letters in certain instances which have come under your observation.

The Greek *Upsilon* had probably a sound like the French *U*, which is somewhat like that of our long *E*. The Romans made their *U* in the form of a *V*, and we often see it written thus in inscriptions at the present day, in imitation of ancient Latin inscriptions.

At the beginning of a syllable it had the force of a consonant, otherwise it was a vowel, the sounds being much the same in either case. In the course of time the two uses of the letter became differentiated, and the vowel was written with a curve below, instead of an angle, thus becoming *U*. Even as a consonant, *V* had in Latin a sound somewhat similar to that of our *OO*. When that became exchanged for the sound of our *V*, there arose a necessity for the *Wen*, which has been mentioned in chapter II.

*The name *Upsilon* was not used by the ancient Greeks, but was applied to the letter in the middle ages.

To sum up the letters which have been certainly or possibly derived from the *Ayin* of the Phœnicians, they were the *Omicron* (from which also the *Omega* was developed) and the *Upsilon* of the Greeks. The Greek *Omicron* became the *O* of the Latin, while the Greek Upsilon developed into the Y, the U, and the V of the later languages.

These changes are of great interest to the student of etymologies; and we do not wonder at the long and patient study which the philologists have given to the mysterious *Ayin*, the presumptive parent of so many letters of the later world.

A peculiar sentiment attaches to the *Upsilon* of the Greeks, as a souvenir of a great teacher, and a symbol possessing moral power. It was called "the Samian letter," since the teacher who caused it to express a moral was born on the isle of Samos. That Pestalozzi of the ancient world was Pythagoras, who, as you may remember, demonstrated that the square described upon the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares described upon the other two sides. Pythagoras taught a famous school at Crotona, in Southern Italy. He was a moralist, as well as a mathematician. He told his pupils that the letter *Upsilon* (Y) represented *the parting of the ways*. Beginning in a straight line, it diverges to the right and to the left at a point which represents in life the occasion when a choice is to be made. The pencil, in tracing the letter, cannot proceed continuously along both lines of divergence. One of these must be chosen, and the other for the time abandoned.

Of the importance of a wise choice, the teachings of antiquity are full. In most of the systems of education in the ancient world, the moral element was strongly presented. "What choice are you making in life?" was the question presented by the *Upsilon*, on every page of the pupil's book, or roll, in the school of old Pythagoras.

A lesson of much the same import was well known to the youths of Judea, some centuries before Pythagoras—the choice of Solomon, as related in the "Second Book of the Chronicles:"

"In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee.

"And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast shewed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead.

"Now, O Lord God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude.

"Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?

"And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king:

"Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that *have been* before

Raphael.

THE SCHOOL AT ATHENS

thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like."

A century after Pythagoras, Xenophon wrote the impressive story of the choice of Hercules, when Virtue and Pleasure presented themselves in the forms of women, seeking his adherence. This story is related by Dwight, as follows:

"Hercules one day betook himself to a lonely spot, to muse undisturbed on his future life and fate; and seating himself on a crossway, he sank into deep reflection. On this occasion two females appeared to him, the one of whom was Luxury, and the other Virtue. Each endeavored to win the youth to her interest—Luxury, by promising him all the enjoyment of a cheerful, careless life, if he would follow her; Virtue, by announcing to him troublesome and laborious days, but afterwards glory and immortality, if he would choose her for his guide in the path of life.

" 'Thee will I follow; to thee devote my life,' exclaimed the youth, with glowing heart, grasping at the same time the hand of Virtue; and he followed her with firm step, resolved to endure patiently every trial that awaited him, to bear every burden that should fall to his lot, and to shun no labor that should be appointed him, however difficult the task might be."

For ideal pictures of the old Greek schools, copyists are wont to select sections of the great painting by Raphael, entitled "The School of Athens." The earnestness of the teacher and mentor of old is reflected in the characters depicted by this great master.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MOUTH.

The human lip or lips, next to the eyes the most expressive feature of the face, supplied the subject for the next letter. Its Phœnician form was this:

The figure may have represented the lower lip. The Hebrew form may have been a profile of the upper lip and the open mouth. It was made thus—

This letter was called *Pi* (pe). The Greeks did not alter its name, though they varied its form; but the Romans, strange to say, restored it almost to the Hebrew form, only it was reversed, with the reversal of the direction of the writing.

It represented a sound similar to that of our *P*, but doubtless it was lighter. In giving our sound of the letter, we press the lips tightly together, and then

explode it with force. We speak energetically, as is characteristic of Northern nations. In the Orient there is no such explosion of the sound. The lips touch but lightly, and it is not always easy to note whether the sound is that of *P* or that of *F*.

The Greeks gave to the letter the former sound; but they needed a letter to represent our sound of *F* also—and hence they added to their alphabet a letter which they called *Phi* (fe). This they considered equivalent to the sound of *Pi* with an aspirate; and so the Romans, who had no *Phi*, used to represent it by *PH*, in words which they derived from the Greeks—though they seem to have formed from *Vav* another letter, *F*, to represent the same sound, and transmitted it to us.

Thus it happens that in such words as *philosophy*, *Philip*, etc., which we have derived through the Latin from the Greek, we use the *PH* instead of the *F*. We do this because the Romans did it.

When the Spanish reformed their orthography, they returned to the use of the simple *F*, which is a successor of the Phœnician *Vav*, and discarded the digraph *PH*. From the Spanish we have derived the word *Filipino*, which, but for their orthographical reform, would be *Philippino*. The fact that the name *Philip* came to us from the Greeks, through the hands of the Romans, is made evident by the use of the Roman, or Latin, *PH*, as the equivalent of the Greek *Phi*. This history of the word would be lost if we should discard the digraph and substitute our *F* for it.

We dread to lose the history of our words, as we

should in many cases, if we were to simplify our spelling. There is thus an historical reason for perpetuating forms of spelling which, in themselves, are very illogical. It is true that *F* is as much a successor of a Phœnician letter as the digraph is, but it does not come to us through the Greeks and Romans in regular order.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SCYTHE.

The next letter represented one of the most familiar implements of man in all ages, down to recent times. This was the scythe, or sickle, which in favored lands in our own age is so generally replaced by the mower, the reaper, and the harvester.

The name of the letter was *Tsaddi* (tsahd′ de). You can scarcely fail to note its resemblance to our word *scythe*. If you will drop the last syllable of *Tsaddi* and soften the sound of the *D* (as the Orientals were so apt to do), the difference in sound between the two words will not be great. If you will end the sound of the *A* with a dainty "vanishing *E*" sound, the similarity will be almost complete.

As a letter, *Tsaddi* is of little or no interest to us, for it was not copied by either the Greeks or the Romans, and it has no representative among our letters. Its sound was a modified sibilant which was different from that of *Samech*, and which we have never possessed.

But the object pictured has always possessed a poetical significance. Its representation in art has appealed to something in the personal experience of all men. And the various forms which it assumes in the letters of old nations give us some idea of the shape of the harvest blades that were used by the toilers when the letters took their form.

In the Phœnician letter, the scythe consisted of a straight handle, to which was attached a jagged blade. It must have been a clumsy instrument, at best. But we must remember that the early Phœnicians were not at all famed for their agriculture. They were far better workmen in other lines of industry than in the making and using of scythes. And when the merchant princes of Tyre, in later times, amused themselves with ornamental farming on their terraces, the letter had assumed a fixed form in their alphabet.

The Phœnician letter was made thus:

The Jews, who were agriculturists as well as herders, evidently possessed a better implement. The Hebrew form of the letter doubtless represented a double handle, to be grasped with both hands, and a blade with a sweeping curve. It was drawn thus:

The conventional sickle (to be used with one hand), with which every one is familiar in art, is best represented by the Arabic letter *Sad*, which has this form:

Breton's Song of the Lark.

THE MAID WITH THE SICKLE.

Even the Greek scythe, as represented in ancient statuary, was a clumsy affair. It had a long handle, nearly straight, with a long, heavy blade, which would render it difficult for the mower to keep the handle from slipping and turning around in his lands. The Hebrew form of the scythe, with its two handles, enabled the wielder to take a firm grasp of the implement.

In poetry and in art, the scythe has always been a symbol of the harvest. And as the harvest time is generally associated with rejoicing, the symbol would seem to be naturally a cheerful one in its suggestiveness. But the Greeks gave it a melancholy significance as a symbol of the great harvest of death. Chronos, or Time, was always represented by them as bearing a great scythe.

A touching poem by Longfellow carries out this idea. It begins thus:

"There is a Reaper whose name is Death,
And with his sickle keen
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between."

With the reapers in the harvests of old are associated the gleaners. Many a charming tale has been told, and many a sweet ballad sung, of the love making on the harvest field. The story of Ruth, the gentle gleaner of ancient Jewish Scripture, has a very strong hold upon the affections of the world.

"And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field and glean ears of corn after him

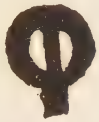
in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter, And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz."

The courtship and marriage which follow are charmingly described in the quaint old "Book of Ruth." Doubtless it will be read in the thousands of years to come, as in the thousands of years past, and painter and poets will find in this story of the harvest field an inspiration for noble conceptions in art and song.

CHAPTER XX.

TWO PICTURES OF THE HEAD.

As there were, in the old alphabet, two pictures of the hand, so there were two outlines of the human head. The first of these was called *Koph*, and was drawn thus:



It represented the back of the head, together with the neck. Through carelessness, doubtless, the mark indicating the neck was extended upward through the outline of the head.

The letter reveals the careful distinctions made between consonant sounds by the old alphabet maker. Perhaps in this instance we have the same differentiation in our own language, but if so we do not generally notice it.

What is the difference, if any, between the sounds of our *K* and *Q*? Careful critics have told us that the sound of Q is formed deeper in the throat than that of *K*,—that it is a sort of guttural sound, while the sound of *K* is purely palatal. This difference, however, is now disregarded by lexicographers, and the two letters have practically the same sound in English.

This fine distinction was carefully noted by the Phœnicians, who could be very particular when it came to considering consonants.

They had *Kòph*,—the *bent hand*,—you will remember, for our sound of *K*. They needed another character for the deeper sound.

The Greeks do not seem to have possessed this sound exactly. They had a guttural which they called *Chi* (kee), and the sound of which was probably much like that of *CH*, in German. The Romans always represented *Chi* by *CH* in words which they adopted from the Greek language. We have derived the words *Choleric*, *Chaos*, etc., from the Greek through the Latin, and our spelling of these words reveals their history. Like the Romans, we use the digraph *CH* to represent the Greek *Chi* in words which we borrow directly from the Greek.

The Romans had occasion to use a direct representative of the old letter *Koph*, and they gave it the form of *Q*, which has come down to us. In our *Q* we may still see the outline of the back of the head, but the neck is bent to one side in a most unnatural way. In our language there is a tendency to substitute some other letter for this, in old words. Thus the word *quell* has been generally transformed into *kill*, although we sometimes use it in a figurative way, as when we speak of *quelling* a riot or a disturbance. *Queue* is now generally *cue*. *Quhairin* has become *wherein*, etc.

As stated, the form of the letter *Koph* was an outline picture of the back of the head. It was a direct

Of the 19th Dynasty.

THE BARGE OF THE SUN GOD

view. This was exceptional; for in the early pictures the head was nearly always drawn in profile.

The profile was much more easily made than a picture of the human face in a direct view, as you may have learned from experience, if you have ever tried to draw the latter. In drawing a full face it is very difficult to picture the nose in a satisfactory manner; and perhaps for this reason the side view was preferred, as being so much easier to represent.

The old alphabet maker escaped this difficulty by picturing the *back* of the head in his direct view.

The next letter also represented the head, or, rather, the top and back of the head; but it was a profile. The name of the letter was *Resh*, and it had essentially the sound of *R*. This letter has been called "the plague of all nations," from the trouble caused by the diversity of its utterance. In the Hebrew alphabet, *Resh* was formed thus:

This is familiar enough in the outlines of heads in ancient pictures—for there was a monotonous sameness to their shapes.

An illustration kindly loaned for this volume by the eminent Egyptologist Professor Breasted, is a photographic reproduction of a very ancient Egyptian picture. In it the heads and the feet of the figures are in profile, although the shoulders are presented in almost a direct view.

In the Phœnician alphabet *Resh* was formed thus:

This picture is rude, and shows very little resemblance to its subject. The back of the head does not round out perceptibly from the neck. The face is turned to the left, for the picture is a profile. Whether the angle represents the nose or the chin is not certain. Probably, at first, the broken line to the left was a tolerably clear outline of both these features.

The Greeks turned the letter around, of course, and also changed its angles to curves, forming a letter much like our *P*. The latter suggests a very long neck, with the rounded front of the head. In our *R* there is another mark added to it, which developed gradually, from a careless touch of the Roman copyist's pen, into an integral part of the letter.

Most peoples seem to have an *R* or an *L*, or both, though the two are much confounded. Why is the letter *R* "the plague of all nations?"

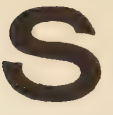
It can be sounded in a variety of ways, from the almost whispered sound which the French give it, and its all but imperceptible utterance in some parts of our own country, to the deep, rolling sound which the Spanish give it.

It has the effect of modifying the sounds of the vowels which precede it, and of one vowel which follows it—for our *U* following *R* has the sound of long *OO*. Its being confounded with *L*, especially by

uncultivated peoples, has been mentioned in connection with the letters *Daleth* and *Lamed*—the *door* and the *whip*. It is illustrated by the Chinaman's "Allee light," and "Melican man."

The charge of affectation is often made against those who slight this letter, and often very unjustly; for it is shown that uniformity in the utterance of its sound is out of the question.

"The plague of all nations" is a profitable subject for the orthoepist to study.



CHAPTER XXI.

THE TEETH.

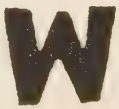
We have already noted two sibilant letters of the old alphabet—*Samech* and *Tsaddi*—the *support* and the *sickle*. There was yet another, which eventually became two. Here is another illustration of the fine distinctions made in the sounds of consonants in the old time.

Little children often confound the sounds of our *S* and our *TH*, and there are some adults who lisp. The Norsemen were so called because they lived in the North. When a large body of them removed to France, many centuries ago, they dropped the sibilant of the word altogether, and called themselves *Normans*.

Perhaps there is a slight difference between the sibilant sounds in our words *song* and *vise;* but if there is, we do not take any account of it.

The Phœnicians felt a need for two other sibilant letters, but they managed to make one answer the purpose of the two.

The picture represented a tooth, or, rather, two teeth. It was called *Shin* or *Sin*, and was drawn thus:



It reminds us more of the teeth of a saw than of

human teeth. The Hebrew form of the letter was more like the tooth of a mastodon. Evidently it represented a large molar. It was this:

Neither the Greeks nor the Romans possessed the sound of our digraph *SH*, which was indicated by *Shin*. Hence they made no use of the letter. We have never had a single letter for this sound exclusively, though we sometimes represent it by the letter *S*, as in the words *sugar*, *sure*, etc.

The letter *Shin* or *Sin* sometimes represented this sound,—or a very close approximation to it,—and at other times it represented a sound more like that of our simple *S*.

The Jews eventually made two letters of it—*Shin and Sin*, making a difference between them by placing a dot over the right of the drawing for the former, and a dot over the left of it for the latter.

The letters *Shin* and *Sin* possess a certain interest because of a tragic event of ancient story which has passed into popular proverb, and which has been often alluded to in religious and political controversies.

Different tribes of Palestine did not all possess the ability to make fine distinctions of sounds. The sound of *Shin* was impossible for some of them to utter; hence their speech betrayed their nationality, even when

they endeavored to conceal it. The tragic occurrence mentioned above is related in "The Book of Judges," a very old book of the Bible, to which reference has already been made. It is recorded in quaint language as follows:

"Then Jephtha gathered together all the sons of Gilead, and fought with Ephriam: and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites. And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites, and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay: then said they unto him, Say now shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him and slew him at the passages of Jordan. And there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand."

Shibboleth, which was given simply as a test word, meant, perhaps, a stream or a flood; but its meaning was of no consequence. To pronounce it aright was a matter of life and death to the poor fugitive who sought to conceal his nationality.

Never in history was there another examination in orthoepy on which so much depended.

Returning to the Phœnician form of this letter, we find it to be like that of our *W*. This is, however, but an accidental coincidence. It is not our *W*, but our *S*, that has come to us from the old *Shin*, or *Sin*. Carelessly, no doubt, the letter was drawn perpendicu-

larly by the Greeks, forming their *Sigma*, which was only a *W* turned up on its right side. The Romans dropped the lower line from this, and rounded the angles of the letter, until it became the Roman *S*, which we inherited.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MARK.

The last of the twenty-two letters of the old Phœnician alphabet was called *Tav* (tahv). It was in the form of a cross, such as is sometimes made in our day by persons who are unable to write.

The word meant, originally, simply a mark, or sign for identification, and was used as such in ancient times.

The man who was unable to write was at least able to "make his mark" in lieu of a signature. Marks were also placed upon camels and other beasts, to indicate ownership; and whatever their form, they were described generally by the name of this letter.

Tav was formed thus:

Its sound was a softened *T*, differing slightly from the sound of *Teth*—the *basket*.

From this letter the Greeks derived their *Tau*, which became the *T* of the Latin alphabet and of our own. The only alteration the letter has undergone has been the raising of the cross bar. Probably this was effected gradually and almost imperceptibly.

Schoolboys who mark a "taw" for their games do not imagine how old a word they are using. For how

many centuries have the boys handed down the ancient name of this letter, or "mark," with but a slight change in the sound of its name! Phœnician boys, Greek boys, Roman boys, Saxon boys, and American boys have shown that boyhood is the same, the world over.

CHAPTER XXIII.

COMMENTS ON THE ALPHABET.

We have thus gone through the Phœnician alphabet from beginning to end. This is the oldest alphabet known. As you may have noted in the preface, it is preferred to consider this alphabet by itself as a complete invention, wrought out in detail for the use of the Phœnicians and the Jews (whose languages were essentially the same), and made of native materials,—the subjects and names of its pictures.

It is not held that there were no alphabetic principles employed anywhere before the alphabet was formed. Ingenious theories have been put forth in an effort to connect directly some of the Phœnician letters with certain characters of the Egyptians, which were originally pictures of objects wholly different. The Egyptian writings contained some characters which were pictures of the objects to be designated; some which were symbols of abstract ideas; some which stood for syllables, and by combinations of which, words might be formed; and some which represented sounds. The writing was a complex system, a medley representing the slow advancement from simple picture drawing towards actual writing.

It is by no means impossible, or even improbable, that the idea of purely alphabetical writing was suggested to the Phœnicians by the use which the Egyptians made of some of their characters. In fact, nearly all the great inventions of the world have been fore-

shadowed by something of experimental effort in the direction of a practical principle. The successful inventor is he who fully grasps the principle and gives it practical effect in a complete instrument or structure. Such was the Phœnician alphabet maker, whether he was a single individual or whether his name was Legion.

Egyptology is a very profound and complicated study; and while it has made prodigious advances within recent years, many of its most interesting problems remain unsolved. For this reason, and because they were not necessarily related to the story of the alphabet invented by the Phœnicians, it has not been deemed advisable in these pages to set forth the theories to which reference has been made. Though they may be of interest to advanced students, they have not the interest which attaches to the Phœnician alphabet, from which our own is directly descended.

It has been thought best to give to each of the Phœnician letters a somewhat rude form, as most suitable to letters which have never been conventionalized in type. We have also given to each letter the name which it bore in the Hebrew tongue, which was essentially the same as the Phœnician name. How some of these letters were sounded by the ancients, is a matter upon which men are not fully agreed. All the letters were consonants, having sounds of their own to unite with the vowels to be supplied, with the single exception of *Aleph*. And even *Aleph* is sometimes considered a consonant, as indicating a very slight breathing, as we have seen.

As an alphabet of consonants, the Phœnician alphabet was singularly perfect and complete. If the Phœnicians were careless of their vowel sounds, and developed but few of them, they were remarkably discriminating and careful in respect of their consonants, as has been shown. Their alphabet was phonetic, their spelling natural. It was not from them that we acquired our digraphs.

In following the Phœnician alphabet through the hands of the Greeks and the Romans, we have seen how the letters have come down to us, and how we came to have digraphs. This, however, has not explained our use of silent letters, of which something remains to be said.

In such words as *fate*, *rate*, *mate*, etc., the final *E* is found necessary, in order to indicate that the *A* is to have the long sound. Without it, the words would be, respectively, *fat*, *rat*, *mat*. If the *E* is used simply to affect the sound of *A* (as is certainly the case), why is it not placed next to the *A*, to form a digraph? The answer to this question is very simple, and very interesting, as explaining a matter which has been a puzzle to many. We had so many vowel sounds that it was necessary to economize by assigning to each vowel letter more than one sound. It came to be understood that *A* at the close of an accented syllable should have the long sound, and that the same vowel between two consonants in a syllable should have the short sound. Thus *R-A* would be pronounced *ray*, and *R-A-T* would spell *rat*. Now the words *fate*, *rate*, *mate*, etc., were formerly words of *two syllables*

each. The *E* was not silent in them; but, being in an unaccented syllable, it came to have an obscure and careless sound, and this was finally omitted altogether, —so that the *E* became silent in these words in the course of time.

The digraph *GH* in such words as *through*, *thought*, etc., formerly represented a guttural sound, similar to that which one hears so often in German words. This sound was gradually lost from our language, but the now silent letters of the digraph remain, to indicate where it was uttered. Sometimes this guttural was changed into the sound of *F*, as in the words *cough*, *rough*, etc.

The Latin language of the Roman Empire became corrupted by the barbarian invaders from the North, and from it were formed the French, the Italian, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the Roumanian, etc. The French orthography became singularly artificial, and seemingly arbitrary. Through the conquest of England by the Norman-French, in 1066, the English language received an immense accession of new words, which were corruptions of the old Latin words, and with them many of the vagaries of French spelling. These words have not generally the forms they would have if they had come to us directly from the Latin, instead of passing first through the hands of the French.

The digraphs, the silent letters, the inconsistencies of our spelling of to-day are all valuable to the lexicographer and to the philologist, as indicating the history of our words, however exasperating they may be to the mass of the people.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A GREAT ALPHABETICAL POEM.

The alphabet has served as a framework for poems, or at least for metrical compositions, in various ages and in different languages. In former days there was a composition of this sort which served as an exercise in the writing of capital letters,—for each important word in it began with a capital, and the important words were in alphabetical order. It began thus:

"An Alphabetical Bouquet for Cora,
Diligently Elaborated by Flora," etc.

Another composition had every word in the first line begin with *A*, every word in the second line with *B*, and so on. It ran thus:

"An Austrian army, awfully arrayed,
Boldly by battery besieged Belgrade.
Cossacks, careering, cannonading come,
Dealing destruction's devastating doom.
Every effort engineers essay," etc.

A poem based upon an artificial plan, to which it must conform, is called a *task* poem. The most notable one in our literature is "The Task," by William Cowper, who was the greatest poet of England in his time, more than a century ago. It was made his task to write a poem about so commonplace a subject as "The Sofa,"—an old, dingy piece of fur-

Michaelangelo.

DAVID.

niture upon which he chanced to be seated at the time when he was called to perform the task.

The greatest task poem in all literature is one which was written probably by King David, the Psalmist of Israel, who lived about eleven centuries before Christ. King David was a musician and a composer of music, as well as a poet. His Psalms are infinitely superior to the hymns to the gods which were sung by the poets of other lands, and they are held by the Christian world to have been inspired. The genius of Michelangelo has given to us, in sculpture, a noble conception of the royal Psalmist.

David's alphabetical poem was one of the greatest compositions in his book of Psalms. It consists of one hundred and seventy-six verses, or strophes—eight for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The first eight verses had for their initial letter *Aleph;* the next eight, *Beth;* the next eight, *Gimel,* etc. Those who read the poem may trace in it the whole life of an individual; the lofty aspirations of youth at the outset, the struggles of young manhood against temptation, the sorrow for and repentance of sin; the settling of the convictions, and the gradually acquired stability of faith and trust; the hard trials of life, and their severe test of perseverance; the injustice and wrong which is suffered at the hands of others: and the final round-up of a life not perfect or ideal, yet based firmly on a sense of right and duty, and hopeful through all its lapses.

It is not surprising that such a poem, covering all the experiences of life, and uncovering the secret thoughts of the human soul, has been treated almost

as a magical composition, and used at times for the purpose of fortune-telling. Its supplying of initial verses has enabled its readers in all ages to select passages corresponding to certain letters, for the purpose of connecting them with names. The reader of this volume, who is now able to trace the origin of the initial of the Christian name by which he is known, will be able to find the eight verses corresponding to that initial in the Hebrew.

Such is the interest attaching to this marvelous task poem that it is appended here for the convenience of the reader, though it can be easily found in any Bible.

PSALM 119.

ALEPH.

Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.

2. Blessed *are* they that keep his testimonies, *and that* seek him with the whole heart.

3. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.

4. Thou has commanded *us* to keep thy precepts diligently.

5. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!

6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.

7. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.

8. I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.

BETH.

9. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.

10. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

12. Blessed *art* thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.

13. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.

14. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as *much as* in all riches.

15. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

16. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

GIMEL.

17. Deal bountifully with thy servant, *that* I may live, and keep thy word.

18. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

19. I *am* a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.

20. My soul breaketh for the longing *that it hath* unto thy judgments at all times.

21. Thou hast rebuked the proud *that are* cursed, which do err from thy commandments.

22. Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.

23. Princes also did sit *and* speak against me: *but* thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.

24. Thy testimonies also *are* my delight *and* my counsellors.

DALETH.

25. My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.

26. I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.

27. Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.

28. My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.

29. Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously.

30. I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid *before me.*

31. I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame.

32. I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

HE.

33. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it *unto* the end.

34. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.

35. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.

36. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

37. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; *and* quicken thou me in thy way.

38. Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who *is devoted* to thy fear.

39. Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments *are* good.

40. Behold, I have longed after thy precepts; quicken me in thy righteousness.

VAU (VAV).

41. Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, *even* thy salvation, according to thy word.

42. So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word.

43. And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.

44. So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever.

45. And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.

46. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.

47. And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.

48. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.

ZAIN (ZAYIN).

49. Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

50. This *is* my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.

51. The proud have had me greatly in derision: *yet* have I not declined from thy law.

52. I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.

53. Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law.

54. Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

55. I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law.

56. This I had, because I kept thy precepts.

CHETH.

57. *Thou art* my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words.

58. I intreated thy favour with *my* whole heart; be merciful unto me according to thy word.

59. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

60. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

61. The bands of the wicked have robbed me: *but* I have not forgotten thy law.

62. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.

63. I *am* a companion of all *them* that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.

64. The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes.

TETH.

65. Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word.

66. Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.

67. Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.

68. Thou *art* good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.

69. The proud have forged a lie against me: *but* I will keep thy precepts with *my* whole heart.

70. Their heart is as fat as grease; *but* I delight in thy law.

71. *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

72. The law of thy mouth *is* better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

JOD (YOD).

73. Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.

74. They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word.

75. I know, O LORD, that thy judgments *are* right, and *that* thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.

76. Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy words unto thy servant.

77. Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law *is* my delight.

78. Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: *but* I will meditate in thy precepts.

79. Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies.

80. Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.

CAPH (KAPH).

81. My soul fainteth for thy salvation: *but* I hope in thy word.

82. Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?

83. For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; *yet* do I not forget thy statutes.

84. How many *are* the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?

85. The proud have digged pits for me, which *are* not after thy law.

86. All they commandments *are* faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.

87. They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts.

88. Quicken me after thy loving-kindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.

LAMED.

89. For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.

90. Thy faithfulness *is* unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.

91. They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all *are* thy servants.

92. Unless thy law *had been* my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.

93. I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me.

94. I *am* thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts.

95. The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: *but* I will consider thy testimonies.

96. I have seen an end of all perfection: *but* thy commandment *is* exceeding broad.

MEM.

97. O how I love thy law! it *is* my meditation all the day.

98. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they *are* ever with me.

99. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies *are* my meditation.

100. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

101. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

102. I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.

103. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! *yea, sweeter* than honey to my mouth!

104. Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

NUN.

105. Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

106. I have sworn, and I will perform *it*, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.

107. I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.

108. Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments.

109. My soul *is* continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.

110. The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.

111. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they *are* the rejoicing of my heart.

112. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, *even unto* the end.

SAMECH.

113. I hate *vain* thoughts: but thy law do I love.

114. Thou *art* my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.

115. Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.

116. Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.

117. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.

118. Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit *is* falsehood.

119. Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth *like* dross: therefore I love thy testimonies.

120. My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.

AIN (AYIN).

121. I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors.

122. Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.

123. Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness.

124. Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.

125. I *am* thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.

126. *It is* time for *thee*, LORD, to work: *for* they have made void thy law.

127. Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.

128. Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning* all *things to be* right; *and* I hate every false way.

PE (PI).

129. Thy testimonies *are* wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.

130. The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

131. I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.

132. Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto

me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.

133. Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

134. Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts.

135. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes.

136. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.

TZADDI.

137. Righteous *art* thou, O LORD, and upright *are* thy judgments.

138. Thy testimonies *that* thou hast commanded *are* righteous and very faithful.

139. My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.

140. Thy word *is* very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.

141. I *am* small and despised: *yet* do not I forget thy precepts.

142. Thy righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness, and thy law *is* the truth.

143. Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: *yet* thy commandments *are* my delights.

144. The righteousness of thy testimonies *is* everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.

KOPH.

145. I cried with *my* whole heart; hear me, O LORD: I will keep thy statutes.

146. I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies.

147. I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hope in thy word.

148. Mine eyes prevent the *night* watches, that I might meditate in thy word.

149. Hear my voice according unto thy loving-kindness: O LORD, quicken me according to thy judgment.

150. They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law.

151. Thou *art* near, O LORD; and all thy commandments *are* truth.

152. Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.

RESH.

153. Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law.

154. Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word.

155. Salvation *is* far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes.

156. Great *are* thy tender mercies, O LORD: quicken me according to thy judgments.

157. Many *are* my persecutors and mine enemies; *yet* do I not decline from thy testimonies.

158. I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word.

159. Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O LORD, according to thy loving kindness.

160. Thy word *is* true *from* the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments *endureth* for ever.

SCHIN (SHIN OR SIN).

161. Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.

162. I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.

163. I hate and abhor lying: *but* thy law do I love.

164. Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.

165. Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

166. LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.

167. My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.

168. I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways *are* before thee.

TAU (TAV).

169. Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to thy word.

170. Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word.

171. My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.

172. My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness.

173. Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.

174. I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law *is* my delight.

175. Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me.

176. I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.

The reader is at first impressed with a repetition of thought and feeling, reminding him of the endless repetition of the same circumstances in Browning's "The Ring and the Book." Yet there is reason for the repetition in both poems, if we can but find the true key to the compositions. The reason in the case of Browning's poems is a psychological one. The reason in the case of the psalm is that of changed circumstances. The same religious thought and feeling are preserved through all the vicissitudes of a checkered life.

Looking carefully through this poem, we find traces of the varying circumstances of the person whose character is depicted. While there is a sameness in the expressions, there is much diversity in the successive conditions of him who utters them; and this gives them added force, as illustrating a fixedness of purpose through all the experiences of life. Human experience is much the same in many things in all ages. And here is the heart experience of a man who lived, doubtless, nearly three thousand years ago.

In the first section of the poem, he is apparently a child, or a youth, with only the commonplace experiences of home life.

In the second, he is a young man, and perhaps has

been sowing some wild oats; for he begins by exclaiming, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" In the third, he seems to have left home and gone into a new environment. He says, "I am a stranger in the earth" (land). He has incurred contempt in high places. In the next he has been the subject of some lying, and has suffered much therefrom. As a result, he resolves that in all his utterances he will cling close to the truth.

In the fifth he seems to have been tempted by the vanity of the upper class. Perhaps he is now prospering, and might secure admission to the worldly set if he chose. But he resolves instead to turn away from it. In the sixth he is growing in influence and prosperity, and expects to be able to advise with kings.

In the seventh, he sees more of the life of the upper class, and is horrified at its vice. As a result, he becomes an object of derision to them.

In the eighth, he has been robbed and perhaps has lost much or all of his wealth, but has gathered friends about him from the really good people.

In the ninth section he is the victim of a conspiracy. A lie has been "forged" against him in his poverty and defenselessness. Here he makes the striking comment: "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept Thy word." Such are the uses of adversity. In the next section he comes to the conclusion that the hand of God is in all his life, and prays that the good people, at least, will be his friends and supporters. Probably the loss of his good name by the temporary success of the forgery is harder to bear than the

derision and the financial losses he has previously sustained.

In the eleventh he is almost in despair. He is like an old wineskin that has hung in the smoke—blackened beyond recognition. He declares that he has "seen an end of all perfection."

In the next he is more composed. He has learned more than all his teachers had taught him.

In the next section, he being now in middle life, a snare is set for him—a temptation, doubtless, in the form of some crooked means of restoring lost fortunes. But, though in great affliction, he is not caught by the snare.

In the next his adversaries are beginning to be "trodden down," and in the sixteenth he exclaims, in anticipated triumph, "It is time for thee, Lord, to work." In the next he receives some wonderful "testimonies," and is chiefly grieved at the sinfulness of men around him. In the eighteenth he has grown "small" in influence again, and is despised. In the next his adversaries "draw nigh" and seem to be closing in upon him.

As the writer draws near to the close of his life he does not experience the triumphant vindication he had expected—the "poetic justice" which used to be meted out at the close of all the stories in our old-fashioned story books, where every evil-doer was punished and every virtuous person sumptuously rewarded before the volume closed.

No, this poem of human life is more in line with Shakespeare and Hugo, and with Pope's "Essay on

Man." It does not deal with "poetic justice," but with divine justice.

We are reminded of Pope's brilliant lines:

"But sometimes virtue starves, while vice is fed.
What then? Is the reward of virtue bread?
* * * *
What nothing earthly gives or can destroy,
The soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy,
Is virtue's prize. A better would you fix,
Then give humility a coach and six,
Justice a conqueror's sword, or truth a gown,
Or public spirit its best cure—a crown!
Weak, foolish man, will Heaven reward us there
With the same trash that mortals wish for here?"

At the very close the old man, reviewing his life, does not find that he has always done right. He exclaims, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep." Yet he is conscious of a predominant motive in life to do right; and he cries, "Let my soul live and it shall praise thee."

One cannot help contrasting this marvelous old poem with "The Book of Job," which winds up with a vision of poetic justice. Perhaps both are needed in equal measure. True it is in general experience that "Honesty is the best policy," even from a material standpoint, as Franklin intended it. Some minds are not capable of rising above such a motive for doing right. But the nobler conception of a life spent in doing right for duty's sake alone—the conception of Emerson's "Compensation" and of Pope's "Essay on Man"—is the conception of this ancient task poem on the alphabet.

CHAPTER XXV.

LETTERS AS NUMERALS.

The ancient peoples of Europe possessed no system of figures, but used certain marks and the letters of the alphabet to express numbers.

The Phœnicians and the Hebrews manifested a clear conception of the decimal system, and made a rational use of the letters, developing their numerals in regular order to ten, and then proceeding by tens to one hundred, thence passing to two hundred, three hundred, and four hundred, at which point their alphabet was exhausted. Thus the numerical significance of the letters was as follows:

Aleph	1.	*Lamed*	30.
Beth	2.	*Mem*	40.
Gimel	3.	*Nun*	50.
Daleth	4.	*Samech*	60.
He	5.	*Ayin*	70.
Vav	6.	*Pi*	80.
Zayin	7.	*Tsaddi*	90.
Cheth	8.	*Koph*	100.
Zeth	9.	*Resh*	200.
Yod	10.	*Shin*	300.
Kaph	20.	*Tav.*	400.

Aleph with two points above it signified 1000.

The Greeks followed the general plan of the Phœnicians and the Jews in their notation, using their old alphabet as a basis; but as their alphabet became

changed in some particulars, irregularities in the notation were introduced. A dot below a Greek letter multiplied by 1000 the number otherwise indicated by it.

The Roman notation, at first sight, seems utterly irrational, and without plan. The following values were assigned to the letters:

A	500.	*M*	1000.
B	300.	*N*	900.
C	100.	*O*	11.
D	500.	*P*	400.
E	250.	*Q*	500.
F	40.	*R*	80.
G	400.	*S*	7.
H	200.	*T*	160.
I	1.	*V*	5.
K	250	*X*	10.
L	50	*Y*	150.
		Z	2000

A line drawn above a Roman letter used as a numeral generally had the effect to multiply by 1000 the number otherwise indicated by the letter. But there were some exceptions to this in the later development of the system.

Upon closer scrutiny, the Roman notation becomes less irrational and is seen to possess something of method. The Romans evidently counted by fives, rather than by tens. Short, straight lines, corresponding to the letter *I*, indicated units. The *V* indicated five of these. The *X* was really two *V*'s, joined at the points, and indicated 10. *C* was the initial of the

word *centum*, which meant one hundred; *M*, the initial of *mille*, which indicated one thousand; *D* the initial of *demi*, meaning *half*, indicated half a thousand, or five hundred.

Critics claim, however, that the more ancient Romans did not use letters at all for this purpose, but employed signs, which became accidentally identified with the letters *M*, *D*, *C*, *L*, *X*, *V*, and *I*, because of a resemblance to them. A circle, divided through the middle by a perpendicular line, represented 1000. It resembled an ornamental *M*. Half of this circle (taken from the right side) represented half the amount of 1000, or 500. It bore a close resemblance to *D*. A character representing 100, in like manner, chanced to be confounded with *C*. An upright *anchor* represented fifty; and when its left fluke was broken off, it looked like an *L* with a curved base line. A unit was represented by a straight mark, which corresponded with the letter *I*. The fifth one of these in a row was made diagonally, to count a "tally" of five, and joined with the first one making a *V*. The *X*, as previously stated, was simply two *V*'s. The other letters were not used as numerals by the Romans of the classic period, but came into use in later ages, and passed wholly out of use as a result of the introduction of figures.

Evidently the use of letters to represent numbers was an advancement upon an older system. At first the Phœnicians used a short perpendicular mark to indicate I, two of them to indicate 2, three of them to indicate 3, and so on up to 9. This was tedious,

and naturally gave rise to devices for the saving of time.

The Roman Empire, which had begun so auspiciously a short time before the birth of Christ, entered soon upon its long decline. It became, in time, divided into two parts, the Eastern and the Western. The latter fell before the power of the barbarian invaders in the year 476, and a period of intellectual darkness followed for about a thousand years. Through all this period there were certain centers of learning, but the masses remained ignorant and inert, and there was little progress made in their enlightenment.

One of the most notable developments of all this long period of the middle ages was the rise and progress of a new religion of the East, which spread rapidly over vast portions of Asia and Africa, and cast its shadows over a large part of Europe.

The new faith arose in Arabia, among a people who had hitherto been only a latent power in the world and of whom the nations had taken little account. Early in the seventh century Mahomet, or Mohammed, an Arabian of singular character and of marked ability, proclaimed himself a prophet of God, and succeeded in uniting the sons of the desert in his support. He claimed the right to propagate his religion by the sword. With fanatical fury and resistless force his followers hurled themselves upon the neighboring nations. All Arabia became united. Persia and Egypt fell, and the tide of conquest rolled rapidly westward over northern Africa to the Atlantic.

In the year 711 the Mohammedan banner was car-

Puerto del Sol.

MOORISH ARCHITECTURE IN THE SPANISH PENINSULA.

ried across the strait into southern Spain, by Taric, who planted it upon the great rock which ever since has borne his name, being known as the *Gibel-al-Taric* (hill of Taric), or Gibraltar. The Saracens, or Moors, as Taric's followers were called, speedily subdued the entire Spanish peninsula. They crossed the Pyrenees, and overran a great part of France. Their advance through Europe was checked only by the terrific seven-days' battle of Tours, in 732, which is one of the landmarks of history.

For seven hundred years the Christians of Spain fought to rid themselves of the invaders; and it was not until 1492, the year in which America was discovered, that the last of the Moorish strongholds fell.

The Moors in Spain were notable for the magnificence of their architecture, and for their progress in many lines of achievement. They were a busy people, and excelled all other nations in some matters of great importance. Their manufacture of sword blades at Toledo became famous all over the world. Their knowledge of astronomy and mathematics was remarkable. They taught the people of Europe to build chimneys to their houses, and to put glass in their windows. They possessed the arts of making sugar and alcohol. In their literature, the Moors made occasional use of rhyme, which lent a new grace to poetry. Their city of Cordova became a great seat of learning. The Mohammedan dominions extended over African and Asiatic lands in an unbroken line from the Atlantic shore to far-off India; and the constant communication which existed between the East and the West resulted

in the rapid diffusion of whatever additions were made to art and knowledge in all this vast domain.

The Moors came to look with contempt upon the Christians, who, of course, regarded them as benighted infidels.

One of the most marvelous of all the strange accomplishments of the Moors was their ability to calculate. Mathematical problems to them were but a pastime; and the quickness and ease with which they computed numbers seemed miraculous.

There was little intercourse between the Christians and the Moors in Spain. In fact, they were almost constantly at war with each other, and neither nationality was disposed to admit without great reluctance the superiority of the other in any matter. The Christians of Spain were very proud of their old university of Salamanca, and their priests were carefully instructed in the literature and science known to Christian nations at that time.

Yet it became evident to the learned men of Spain that the Moors possessed a great advantage in their methods of calculation. What was the secret of their power? Did they receive assistance from the Evil One? It seemed so, indeed, for they were also engaged in occult experiments in a very singular art known as *alchemy* (which has developed into our modern chemistry), and by means of this art they seemed to perform miracles.

In time it became whispered about that their great mathematical abilities were due to an art colled *algo-*

rismus, which was taught at old Cordova. What could it be?

A certain bright scholar of Spain, as legend tells us, determined to acquire this and other arts of the Moors. Why should he not, if he could? Ought the Moors to be allowed to monopolize the great powers which they wielded by means of their strange learning?

Yet there were scruples in his mind. Was he quite certain that a Christian ought to learn of a Moor? Was not this strange learning under some curse, as given of the Devil? The young man's thirst for knowledge outweighed every misgiving, and he resolved to acquire the arts of the Moors at any cost. He assumed a disguise, and passed himself off as a young Moor. As such he entered the University at Cordova, where he was highly successful in carrying out his part. Here he acquired a knowledge of the wonderful art of algorismus, the use of figures as we see them in our arithmetic today. He returned to his people with a mastery of the art, and gave the results of his study to the Christian nations. We use today the figures, the methods, and the rules which he acquired. We still call the characters *Arabic* figures, though we have changed the name of the art from *algorismus* to *arithmetic*.

Whence did the Moors or Arabs obtain them? It was long supposed that they were an Arabic invention; but the researches of learned and patient investigators have shown that this was an error, and that the use of figures arose in India, whence it was passed on to the Arabs.

In 874 an Indian ambassador won great favor among the Mohammedans by taking to Bagdad some remarkable astronomical tables, and it is believed that he gave the teachers at Bagdad, at the same time, the figures and the methods of the wonderful art, algorismus. This name, which is a barbarous word, and which took later the form of *algorism*, or *algorithm*, is now known to be a corruption of the name of Abu Jafar Mahomet al-Kharizmi, who wrote, in the eighth century, a full exposition of the decimal system of numbers, setting forth the processes of calculations.

This wonderful book has been lost to the world, unless, indeed, it exists in the form of a translation, under the name of some other writer. But the principles, and many of the processes, which it set forth are now universally familiar, being found in myriads of text-books in all enlightened lands. The name *algorismus*, as has been said, has given place to *arithmetic*, which is derived from the Greek.

What was the origin of the forms of the figures or digits? Ingenious scholars have supplied a very plausible explanation, which is given for what it is worth.

It is known that the Phœnicians, who used short perpendicular lines for the numbers up to *nine*, arranged them in such a manner that they might catch them quickly. They arranged them, so far as possible, by *threes*, beginning at the right, thus:

I
II
III
I III
II III
III III
I III III
II III III
III III III

Perhaps the Hindus began in some such way. But it probably occurred to them that the lines could be written connectedly to better advantage, and that by having a different *arrangement* of the lines for each number of lines, the eye could catch them still more readily. This is the supposed arrangement which developed into the Arabic figures:

A natural tendency to substitute curves for angles would lead the writers to a near approach to our figures now in use. The diamond in the character which stood for *seven* could easily degenerate into a heavy shading of the downward stroke. Likewise, the upper diamond of the character for *nine* would naturally be dropped, in time, as useless.

But the most important character of all is the cipher, which was made from the beginning as it is made today. It possessed a philosophical significance

which throws a clear light upon the whole decimal system.

Really, it did not matter much what particular forms the nine digits might assume. The essential fact of the system was its decimal character. The system was one of *orders*. A unit of the second order was equal to ten units of the first order. Units and tens might be written together in their proper orders. Thus the figures 15 represented *fifteen*. According to the theory of the Roman notation, they would represent only *four;* for it was a principle of the Roman method that the number at the left was to be subtracted from a larger number to the right.

But what was the origin of the decimal system? Evidently it was *the number of fingers on the hands.* Many savages have been known who could not count to ten in names of numbers, but who could ascertain if a number of objects was equal to the number of their fingers. By bending down one finger for each man present in a small company, they could give an idea of the number, even if they could not express it in a word. Doubtless men at first counted with their fingers. And when they had gone *once around* the fingers, that very fact gave them a unit of a higher order. Thus 10 meant *once around* the hands, and 20 meant *twice around.* It was thus perfectly natural that a circle should be employed to express the idea of *once around.* And thus we have our cipher, unchanged from the beginning.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DOMINICAL LETTER.

The ancient Romans had no weeks or week-days, only months and days of the month. Yet they could not trust themselves to count thirty days in succession, but counted forward, always, to one of three notable days in each month. The Hawaiians (it may be noted), before the introduction of Christianity, had no weeks, but had a separate name for every day of the month—an astonishing evidence of their intellectual activity.

When the Romans began to be Christianized, it became necessary for them to observe the first day of the week, which we call Sunday, and to give it a name. They reverently called it "*Dominica*," which might be translated "Lord's Day." Beginning with the first day of the year, they set down *A* in their calendar; *B* represented the second day, *C* the third, and so on to *G*, after which the letters were repeated throughout the year. If the year began with Sunday, then the letter *A* indicated Sunday throughout the year, unless it was a leap-year. Whichever letter indicated Sunday was called the "Dominical letter" for the year.

When the Saxons invaded and conquered Britain, in the fifth century, they really had no need to use the letters to designate the days of the week, for they had a name for each. They called the days by names

which meant Sun-day, Moon-day, Tiw's-day, Woden's-day, Thor's-day, Freya's-day, and Saturn's-day. But the Saxons were deemed unlettered heathen hordes, and the religious men went on keeping the time in their old Roman way. When almanacs came to be published, the names of the days were used, but the old use of the letters was not wholly abandoned; nor is it to this day, for we still note, each year, the Dominical letter.

The present time is an exceptionally favorable one for considering this letter, since a new cycle began with the year 1905. In other words, the Dominical letter for 1905 is *A*. The year began with Sunday. Excepting leap-years, this will happen but twice again before 1933. We have entered upon a series of Dominical letters which will not begin to repeat itself in order on the same week days until after 28 years. Many have become discouraged in studying the Dominical letter, by reason of the technicalities which have been thrown about it, and the mathematical laws which govern it. Really, however, the whole matter is simple enough. And certainly it should possess some historic interest, since it has come down to us from the earliest Christian ages.

For a long time after the almanacs began to be printed, they were the luxury of the few. The masses of the people had to do without them; and the expedients to which they resorted in keeping track of the days are interesting to remember. These expedients were mnemonic rhymes. Two doggerels constituted their calendar, and were handed down from generation to generation. One of these was the following:

Thirty days hath September,
April, June, and November.
All the rest have thirty-one,
Save the second month alone,
Which hath twenty-eight in fine,
And in leap-year twenty-nine.

So much for the months. What about the days with which the months began? These were supplied by the "Three Men of Dover," who probably were purely mythical characters, created to fit the needs of another doggerel. This is the way it ran:

At Dover dwell George Brown, Esquire,
Good Christopher Finch, and David, Friar.

This was the key to the first day of every month in the year. The doggerel contains twelve words, it will be seen; one for each month. Let us apply this to the year 1905, which began with Sunday. The first word stands for January, and of course begins with *A*. The second word stands for February, and begins with *D*, which stands for Wednesday. The third word stands for March, and likewise begins with *D*. Following the couplet through, it will be seen that in 1905 April begins with Saturday, May with Monday, June with Thursday, July with Saturday, August with Tuesday, September with Friday, October with Sunday, November with Wednesday, and December with Friday.

With the universal use of almanacs and calendars in recent generations, little attention has been paid to the time-keeping folklore of our ancestors, and the

"Three Men of Dover" have been well-nigh forgotten. Still, it is worth while even now to remember the old couplet.

Suppose we desire to know on what day the Fourth of July comes in 1905, but have no calendar at hand. The doggerel tells us that the first day of July is Saturday, from which it will readily appear that the Fourth falls on Tuesday. Next, suppose we desire to know the day on which Thanksgiving falls. The doggerel tells us that December begins on Friday; hence the last day of November is Thursday,—and so likewise is the twenty-third of that month.

In applying this old couplet, it is always necessary to know, first, on what day of the week the year begins, for that day will be represented by A throughout the year, unless it be a leap-year—in which case it will be represented by the preceding letter in the series, from the first of March to the end of the year.

To the student of folklore, the quaint old couplet is something more than a means of calculating days. It brings to life a trio of characters in old England which we have never known to any considerable extent in America, and which are passing away in the Old World—the old types of the English squire, the "good" laboring man, who was not dignified with the title of *Mr.*, and the pious friar. A charming picture they would make if a clever artist should group them upon a canvas—the rosy-faced, happy, and hearty squire, the self-respecting laborer, and the true son of the old church, in his somber robe and hat.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BOOKS AND PRINTING.

When Alexander the Great, King of Macedon, conquered the world so far as it was known to him, he sought to make it a Greek world,—for he was of Greek descent, and took great pride in his Greek ancestry and education. When his vast empire suddenly fell to pieces at his death (323 B. C.), his Greek commanders divided his domain among themselves, and thus carried on the work which he had begun.

One of these was Ptolemy, who became the Greek king of Egypt, and who established a dynasty which endured to the death of the famous Cleopatra (30 B. C.). The Ptolemys were famous patrons of letters. The first of the line established the great Alexandrian library in the new Greek-Egyptian city which Alexander had built and named in his own honor. Here were carefully copied and preserved the poems, dramas, and histories of the Greeks, wherever they might be found. As the library grew, it was determined to incorporate into the collection the great works of other languages than the Greek. At a cost of more than two and a half million dollars, the Hebrew Scriptures were secured from the Jewish king, and translated into Greek by the most learned men of the time. The translation, known as the "Septuagint," is preserved, and is found in all great libraries today.

The books were all written upon great sheets formed from layers of the bark of the *papyrus*, a shrub, or small tree, from the name of which we derive the word *paper*.

Another famous library was that of Pergamos, the books of which were written upon the skins of animals. These skins came to be called *pergamenta*, from which comes our word *parchment*.

In the time of Christ the city of Rome had become the capital of the world, and the Roman (Latin) literature was in its golden age. The works of great authors were published for the libraries of the wealthy, who had become a numerous class. They were written on *volumina* (rolls) from which we derive our word *volume*. They were written all in capital letters, without punctuation, and without division of words, though each verse of poetry constituted a line by itself. In a publishing house a hundred or more trained scribes wrote at the dictation of a reader, and thus an equal number of books were begun and finished together. Of course, no two would be exactly alike in appearance, since the work was all done by hand.

A more rapid and less formal style of letters came into use among the people for informal communications and for memoranda.

As the Roman Empire declined, literature fell into decay: and when the Empire fell, learning was possessed only by the few who were trained for the priesthood or for special professional work of a secular character. Then followed the long, long night of a thousand years, which we call the middle ages, and

which lasted until the great awakening at the time of the invention of printing.

Towards the close of the fourth century, in the closing days of the Roman Empire, a stolen boy from Gaul was sold by marauders to be a slave in the north of Ireland, where he witnessed the wretched paganism of the people. He made his escape from captivity, and prepared himself for the service of the Church. Bearing the commission of Pope Celestine, he returned in his mature years to be a missionary to the Irish people. His labors as an educator were scarcely less notable than his work as a minister. He established schools, trained instructors for them, and organized and multiplied his work so skilfully that Ireland became, in the centuries following, the greatest educational center of Europe. The name of this great priest and educator was Saccath; but the proud name of Patricius (noble) was conferred on him by the Pope, and he is universally known and revered as "Saint Patrick."

A singularly beautiful form of writing known as the "Irish uncial" characterized the books put forth in the Emerald Isle. Irish monks carried it to England, and the famous Alcuin carried it from York to Gaul, when he founded a great school at Tours, in the time of Charlemagne.

Whence St. Patrick derived the form of script which undoubtedly he taught the Irish, it is not easy to determine. Being a man of great fertility of resources, he may have given it some character or adaptation of

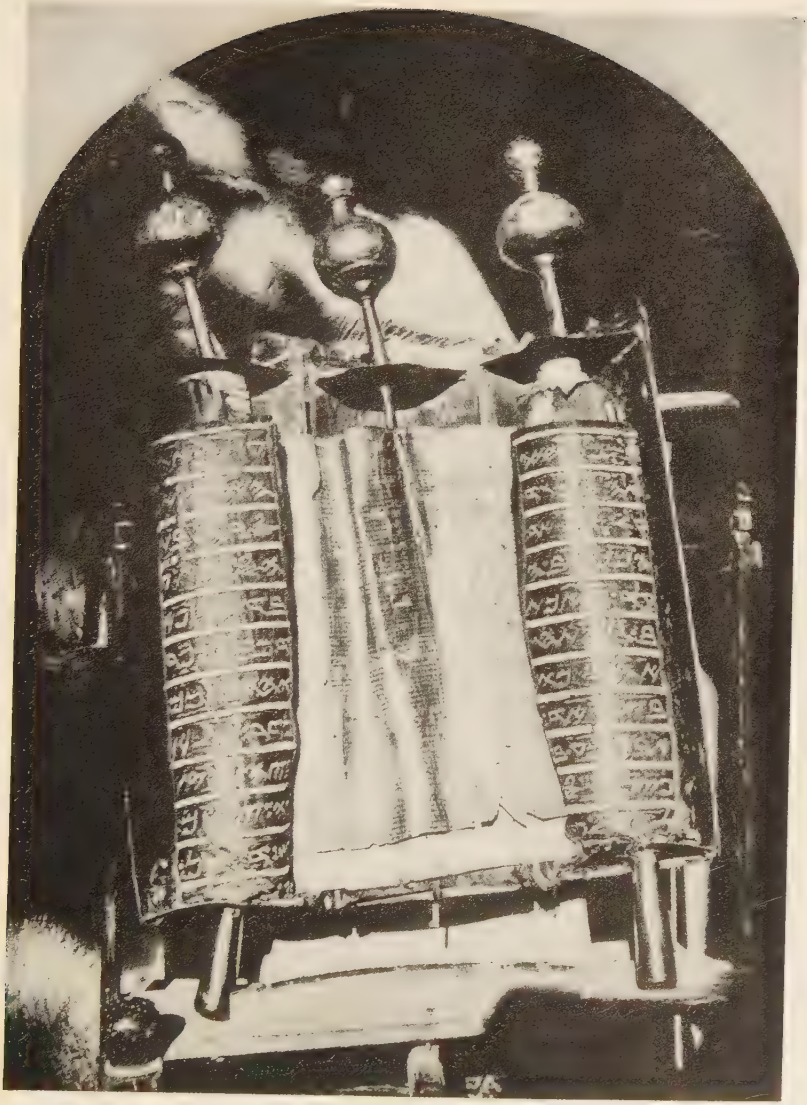
his own. At all events, it was an inestimable boon to Europe.

Writing, in the long period of the middle ages, was pursued with great difficulty. It was but a slender cord that stretched from the old civilization to the new. The wonder is that any considerable amount of the old literature was preserved through all the vicissitudes of the thousand years. Writing materials were scarce and expensive. Literature was despised by the wealthy, who alone could have afforded to patronize it. There was no market for books. In the cells of monks, who toiled with the pen till their lives were done, the books were copied and handed down.

Among the greatest of the ancient rolls now remaining is that of the Samaritan Pentateuch, depicted in the engraving.

About the middle of the fifteenth century came the invention of printing, which was to make books plentiful and cheap. With it came a great and widespread revival of learning in Europe. Two distinct alphabets —capitals and lower-case letters—were provided for the typesetters. The beginnings of punctuation were seen in the oblique strokes which performed the office of periods and commas; but the use of points was not developed into a system until the beginning of the sixteenth century. The printed letters took various forms. There was a tendency to depart from the beautiful simplicity of the Latin alphabet and to prefer the elaborate styles of the German and the Old English.

The books printed before the year 1500 are called



THE PENTATEUCH.

incunabula. There are perhaps as many as six thousand now remaining, and they are very highly prized as specimens of the art of printing in its infancy.

The simple Latin alphabet long ago displaced the Old English (Black-letter), and is now rapidly displacing the ornamental letters of the Germans. Our German friends claim, however, that their script is superior to ours, since it is angular, and but little curved, and for this reason may be written very easily and rapidly. Even the old German, or Gothic, type of letters is becoming simplified in its form.

The plain Latin letters are used in nearly all the languages of Europe and America; the Russian, the Greek, and the Turkish being the principal exceptions. They seem destined to become the alphabet of the civilized world.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PRINCIPLES OF ORTHOEPY.

Orthoepy means the art of pronouncing words correctly. A brief presentation of the essential principles of this art is appended here, as a fitting sequel to the history of the individual letters.

THE SOUNDS OF A.

There are eight regular sounds of this vowel, as recognized in Webster's "International Dictionary," besides two exceptional sounds.

1. *Long A*, which is indicated thus (ā). It is accompanied with the "vanishing E" sound described in chapter VII. Examples: *āle, tāpe, stāy.*

This sound was probably unknown to the ancients, and it is found very difficult for foreigners to acquire perfectly, though it seems easy to us. We have developed it within recent centuries.

2. *Modified Long A*, which is indicated thus (ā). This occurs in unaccented syllables, and is without the "vanishing E" sound. Examples: *adāge, prefāce, solāce.*

3. *A with the circumflex*, which is indicated thus (â). This occurs only in syllables ending in *R*, and rather strongly accented. Examples: *shâre, pârent, compâre.* Do not say "payrent" for *parent*, or "vayrious" for *various*. When the *R* is followed by another *R*, or a vowel in the next syllable of the word, this

sound does not always occur. Examples: *părity, mărriage, compărison.* (See short *A.*)

4. *Short A,* which is indicated thus (ă). It is followed by a consonant sound, closing a syllable. Examples: *ăx, hăve, părity.*

In some modern languages—the German, for instance—this sound does not occur; and it is often found very difficult for foreigners to acquire. La Salle street, in Chicago, is often called "*Le Sel*" street by foreign-born residents because they are obliged to substitute another sound for that of short *A.*

5. *Italian A,* which is indicated thus (ä). It is a narrower sound than that of short *O,* with which it should never be confounded. Examples: *sälve, härm, fäther.*

In England the same sound is often given to *E* before *R,* as in *clerk* (pronounced *clark*).

6. *Middle A,* which is indicated thus (ȧ). This is also called *short Italian A.* To use it properly is a mark of culture. Examples: *ȧsk, grȧss, dȧnce.*

"The sound is one which most persons have not ear and vocal organs so trained as to appreciate," says Webster. Nevertheless there has been a vast improvement in the use of this sound in America within recent years, as a result of greater care in the teaching of orthoepy in the schools, by means of diacritical marks.

In unaccented syllables, this sound becomes obscure, as in *diȧdem, Indiȧ,* etc., but never becomes short *U.*

7. *Broad A,* which is indicated thus (a̤). This is the well-understood sound of the vowel in *fa̤ll, a̤wl, ta̤lk,* etc. There is a tendency to substitute for it

Italian *A*. Do not say "wah-ter" for *water*, or "wahnt" for *want*.

8. *A with a dot below*, which is indicated thus (ạ). Examples: *was*, *what*, *wander*. It is often deemed the exact equivalent of short *O*, though careful speakers make a distinction between them.

The sounds of *A* not included in the eight given above are two in number. One of these is the equivalent of short *E*, as in *many*, *again*, *said*, etc. The other is the obscure sound occurring before *N*, *L*, *S*, *F*, *P*, or *D*, in such words as *infant*, *fatally*, etc., where the vowel is in the last or middle syllable, and the syllable is unaccented. This sound is often called *Italic A* and is indicated by the use of an Italic letter.

THE SOUNDS OF E.

The letter *E* has six sounds in accented syllables, and one in unaccented syllables, besides its use in digraphs and as a silent letter. These are as follows:

1. *Long E*, which is indicated thus (ē). Examples: *ēve*, *mēte*, *Pēter*.

2. *Modified or unaccented long E*, which is indicated thus (ḗ). Examples: *ḗvent*, *ḗpitome*, *crḗate*. In pronouncing the word *society*, no careful speaker will substitute for this sound either the long *E* or the short *U*.

3. *E as the equivalent of long A*, which is indicated thus (e̱). Examples: *obe̱y*, *e̱ight*, *ve̱in*. It is always followed by *I* or *Y*.

4. *Short E*, which is indicated thus (ĕ). Examples: *ĕnd*, *fĕnce*, *ĕrror*.

5. *E as the equivalent of* $\hat{A}$. This is represented thus (ê). Examples: *hêir, whêre, thêre.* It is always followed by *R.*

6. *E with the tilde,* which is indicated thus (ẽ). To utter this sound correctly and without affectation is one of the tests of a trained and cultured speaker. Examples: *fẽrn, bẽrth, intẽr.* It occurs in accented syllables and before *R,* when the latter is not followed by another *R* in the following syllable of the word. It is often confounded with the $\hat{U}$. A majority of the people, in fact, confound the two, and use the same vowel sound for *fern* and *burn.* By extending the mouth horizontally the sound of $\tilde{E}$ may be easily uttered, and will be noted as made higher in the throat than the short *U.* It approaches the sound of $\hat{E}$ and *A,* but is shorter and more delicate. *E* with the tilde becomes obscure in unaccented syllables, as in the words *evẽr, sevẽral, pẽrform,* etc. Before *N* or *L,* in such words as *novel, prudent,* etc., the obscure E is called *Italic E,* and is written with an Italic letter.

THE SOUNDS OF I.

There are five sounds of this vowel, besides a consonant sound sometimes given to it.

1. *Long I,* which is indicated thus (ī). Examples: *thīne, īce, gīant.* This is really a combination of sounds, beginning with Italian *A,* and gliding into short *I.* The glide is made with a quickness that is surprising to many foreigners, who find the combination difficult to acquire.

2. *Modified or unaccented long* $\dot{I}$, which is indicated thus (i). Examples: *i̇dolatry, i̇dea, bi̇ology.*

3. *I as the equivalent of* $\bar{E}$, which is indicated thus (ï). Examples: *pïque, machïne, intrïgue.*

4. *Short I*, which is indicated thus (ĭ). Examples: *pĭn, stĭck, vĭsible.*

5. *I with the tilde*, which is indicated thus (ĩ). This is the exact equivalent of *E* in *fẽrn, bẽrth*, etc. Examples: *vĩrgin, bĩrd, ĩrksome.*

This letter has a consonant value, being equivalent to *Y*, in such words as *minion, genius, Virginia*, etc.

THE SOUNDS OF O.

This vowel has seven sounds, besides an exceptional use and its sound as a mere glide.

1. *Long O*, which is indicated thus (ō). This differs from the ancient long sound of the letter (which is preserved in European languages), since it is accompanied with the *vanishing OO* sound described in Chapter XVII. Examples: *mōte, ōld, dōme.*

Long *O* occurring before R in the same syllable is apt to be somewhat modified by it. Yet careful speakers generally preserve the long *O* sound in such words as *fort, sport, port*, etc., and do not confound it with the sound of *O* in *horse, born*, etc.

2. *Modified long O*, which is indicated thus ($\dot{\bar{o}}$). This occurs in unaccented and generally open syllables. Examples: $\dot{\bar{o}}$*bey,* $\dot{\bar{p}}$*oetic,* $\dot{\bar{S}}$*ocratic.*

3. *O with the circumflex*, which is indicated thus (ô). This occurs in accented syllables where it ap-

pears before an *R* not followed by another *R*, or a vowel in the word. Examples: *hôrse, lôrd, abhôr.*

4. *Short O,* which is indicated thus (ŏ). Examples: *gŏd, lŏg, dŏg.* This sound has been much perverted; and owing to its frequent recurrence, it is a test of a cultured speaker. The word *gŏd* is often pronounced "gahd" or "gawd." Some eminent pulpit orators, despairing of the true sound, have called it "gud." All these mispronunciations are disgusting to the refined ear. There is no good reason why the proper sound of short *O* should be difficult to acquire.

5. *O the equivalent of long OO,* which is indicated thus (o̤). Examples: *mo̤ve, pro̤ve, to̤mb.* (See long *OO*).

6. *O the equivalent of short OO,* which is indicated thus (o̤). Examples: *wo̤man, bo̤som, wo̤lf.* (See short *OO.*)

7. *O the equivalent of short U,* which is indicated thus (ȯ). Examples: *abȯve, lȯver, frȯnt.* Where this occurs before *R*, as in *worm,* it is modified into the sound of *U* in *urn.* In unaccented syllables, *O* has an obscure sound, as in *actor, editor,* etc. It represents a mere glide in such words as *reason, beckon* (pronounced re′z'n, bek'n), etc.

THE SOUNDS OF OO.

These are two in number, besides the use of this double letter as the equivalent of long *O*, and an exceptional use of it.

1. *Long OO,* which is indicated thus (o͞o). Examples: *o͞oze, mo͞or, bo͞ot.*

2. *Short OO*, which is indicated thus (o͝o). Examples: *foot, wool, good.* The sound of short *OO* is often improperly substituted for that of long *OO*. Do not say "ro͝om" for *rōom*, or "ro͝ot" for *rōot*.

OO as the equivalent of long *O* occurs in *door, floor, brooch*, etc., and in many proper names derived from the Dutch; as *Roosevelt, Brevoort, Roovaart*, etc. Do not say "dawr" and "flawr" for *door* and *floor*.

OO as the equivalent of short *U* occurs in *blood* and *flood*.

THE SOUNDS OF U.

These are six in number, in addition to a consonantal sound and certain exceptional sounds.

1. *Long U*, which is indicated thus (ū). This is one of the most difficult sounds in the language to master in a satisfactory manner. It is not precisely the same in different words. It is not a sound upon which the authorities are generally agreed. It is, in fact, a combination of sounds. There is an initial vowel element, about the same as short *I*, then the *Y* glide, and the sound of long *OO*. Examples: *ūse, abūse, hūman.* After *N*, the *Y* sound is less prominent, as in *numerous.* After *J, S, L*, and *TH*, the *Y* glide need not be given, as in *assūme, enthūsiast*, etc. After *T* or *D* it is better to omit the *Y* glide, leaving only the initial vowel element to be followed directly by the sound of long *OO*, as in *institute, tune, duke*, etc.

2. *Modified long U*, which is indicated thus (u̇). This occurs in unaccented syllables. Examples: *graduȧl, u̇nite, conjū̇gate.*

3. *U after R*, which is indicated thus (u̇). It is equivalent to long *OO*, or to a very brief short *OO* followed by long *OO*. Examples: *rude, rule, brute.*

4. *U the equivalent of short OO*, which is indicated thus (u̇). Examples: *pull, full, sugar.*

5. *U with the circumflex*, which is indicated thus (û). This is closely allied to short *U*, but is modified by the *R*. Examples: *ûrn, bûrn, pûrchase.* Attention has been called to the difference between this sound and *E* with the tilde.

6. *Short U*, which is indicated thus (ŭ). Examples: *up, bud, must.*

U has, by exception, the sound of short I in *busy.* It has a consonantal use, like that of *W*, in *question, quality*, etc.

THE SOUNDS OF Y.

This letter, used as a vowel, has all the sounds of *I* except the one which is the equivalent of long *E* (ÿ), and is similarly marked to indicate them. It has even this sound in certain proper names of foreigners, as in *Haüy* (pronounced ah-weé) and *Barye* (pronounced bah-reé).

THE CONSONANTS.

The consonants of the English language are generally uttered with force, and are distinct and unmistakable. Moreover, they generally represent each but a single sound. Hence they present but little difficulty to the student of orthoepy, they being in marked contrast with the vowels in this respect.

B and *P* are uttered by compressing the lips together

and opening them suddenly, under pressure of the breath. *D* and *T* are sounded by pressing the tongue firmly against the roof of the mouth (not against the teeth), and suddenly withdrawing the pressure. *K* and and hard *G* are produced by closing the palate completely, compressing the air in the throat, and suddenly opening the passage. *F* and *V* are pronounced by a partial obstruction of the breath, which is effected by pressing the upper teeth against the lower lip. *S* and *Z* are produced through a partial obstruction of the breath by the back of the tongue, which is loosely pressed against the roof of the mouth. The flowing sounds of *L*, *M*, *N*, and *R* may be sounded continuously like simple vowels, and for this reason they are called *liquids*. As stated in a preceding chapter, our language formerly contained harsh guttural sounds, which have been wholly eliminated through ages of refinement, and which are remembered now through the silent letters which formerly represented them—as, for instance, the silent *GH* in *brought*.

A few of the consonants offer a special study as to their use. They are as follows:

1. *C*, which may be hard or soft. Hard *C* is indicated thus (c). It may be followed by *A*, *O*, or *U*. At the close of a syllable *C* is hard, unless followed by *I* or *E*. Moreover, it is hard before these vowels in the same syllable in a few words, such as *sceptic*, *scirrous*, etc.

Soft *C* is indicated by the cedilla, thus (ç). This may be followed by *E*, *I*, or *Y*. It is equivalent to *S*. When *C* is followed by *E* or *I*, and another vowel in

the same syllable, it has the sound of *SH*, either by itself, as in *oceanic* and *viciosity*, or in connection with the *E* or *I*, as in *ocean*.

In a few words, as *discern*, *sacrifice*, and *suffice*, *C* has the sound of *Z*.

The digraph *CH* has the value of *TSH* in many words, as *much*, *Charles*, etc.; the sound of *SH* in many others, as *machine*, *chivalry*, etc.; the sound of *K* in many words derived from the Greek, through the Latin or directly, as *epoch*, *echo*, etc.

2. *F*, which has sometimes the sound of *V*, as in *of*, *whereof*, etc.

3. *G*, which likewise may be hard or soft, and which has come to us from the original *Gimel*.

Hard *G* is indicated thus ($\bar{g}$). It may be followed by *A*, *O*, or *U*, *L*, *R*, or *S*. Sometimes it may be followed by *E*, *I*, or *Y*, as in *get*, *gimlet*, and *foggy*.

Soft *G* is indicated thus ($\dot{g}$). It occurs usually before *E*, *I* or *Y*. By exception it occurs before *A* in *gaol* (of which word *jail* is the form preferred). It is the sound of *J*.

In certain words derived from the French, as *menagerie*, *garage*, and *rouge*, *G* has the sound of *ZH*.

The digraph *NG* represents a nasal sound, as in *sing*, but does not contain any sound of *G*. In such words as *linger*, *strongest*, etc., the *NG* is not a digraph, the two letters belonging to different syllables; the *N* has the force of the digraph *NG*, but the *G* has its own proper sound.

4. *S*, which has four sounds; the "proper" sound, as in *sun*, *sky*, etc.; the sound of *Z*, as in *ruse*, *fuse*,

easy, etc.; the sound of *SH*, as in *sugar*, *mansion*, *version*, etc., and the sound of *ZH*, as in *usual*, *explosion*, *decision*, etc.

Among the variations of other letters are the following:

T followed by *I* and another vowel in the same syllable has often the sound of *SH*, taken in connection with the *I*, as in *position*, *action*, *partial*, etc.

X has often the sound of *GZ*, as in *exist*, *examine*, etc. At the beginning of a word it has the sound of *Z*, as in *Xerxes*, *xylophone*, etc.

The accenting of words is a matter of peculiar difficulty in English, since our accents cover a wider range of syllables than do those of most other languages. One, two, three, or even four unaccented syllables may follow the accented syllable, as in *du'ty*, *rel'evant*, *mis'erable*, or *nec'essarily*. We have two accents, the primary and the secondary. We should be careful not to give two accents where but one is permissible. Thus the word *primary* should be pronounced with but one accent, and that upon the first syllable, as we pronounce the words *no'tary*, *ro'tary*, etc. The accent is often misplaced by careless speakers, as in the words *ob'ligatory*, *nec'essarily*, *inex'orable*, *irrev'ocable*, etc.

GENERAL NOTES.

I.

THE APOCRYPHAL STORY.

The story of the alphabet lesson of the child Jesus is variously given in the Apocryphal Gospels. In "The Gospel of St. Thomas" it is as follows:

"And Joseph, seeing that He had such favor, and that He was increasing in stature, thought it right to take Him to learn His letters. And he handed Him over to another teacher to be taught. And that teacher said to Joseph: What letters dost thou wish me to teach that boy? Joseph answered and said: First teach Him the Gentile letters, and then the Hebrew. For the teacher knew that He was very intelligent, and willingly took Him in hand. And writing for Him the first line, which is *A* and *B*, he taught Him for some hours.

"But Jesus was silent, and made him no answer. Jesus said to the master: "If thou art indeed a master, and if thou knowest the letters, tell me the power of the *A*, and I shall tell thee the power of the *B*."

In "The Gospel of the Pseudo-Matthew," the account is as follows:

"Then Joseph and Mary, soothing Jesus, took Him to the schools, that He might be taught His letters by old Levi. As soon as He went in He held His tongue. And the master Levi said one letter to Jesus, and, beginning from the first letter, *Aleph*, said to Him:

Answer. But Jesus was silent, and answered nothing. Wherefore the preceptor Levi was angry, and seized his storax-tree rod, and struck Him on the head. And Jesus said to the teacher Levi: "Why dost thou strike me? * * * Tell me what the first one, *Aleph*, is, and I shall then believe you when you have said *Beth*."

In one of the accounts contained in "The Arabic Gospel of the Saviour's Infancy," the master only *threatens* to flog the child, who says to him: "Tell me the meaning of the letter *Aleph*, and then I shall pronounce *Beth*."

There are other variations of the story. The reader will observe that the account contained in the first chapter of this book is an impressionist version, generalized from a reading of all these.

II.

EGYPTIAN WRITING.

Into the theories which seek to connect the invention of the Phœnician alphabet with the phonograms (characters indicating sounds) in the Egyptian writing, it has not been the purpose of this book to enter. The subject is one of interest to specialists and to advanced students, who enjoy the fields of scholarly speculation.

Phonograms existed in Egypt from a very remote antiquity; but they constituted, according to Edward Clodd, only about one-sixteenth of the whole number

of written characters, and they were so mingled with the other elements which entered into the Egyptian writing that the system to which they belonged could not be described as alphabetic. The Egyptians seem not to have realized what might be accomplished with an alphabetic system, and not to have recognized the fact that they were using any letters. Canon Isaac Taylor says, in speaking of their phonograms;

"All that remained to be done was to take one simple step—boldly to discard all non-alphabetic elements, at once to sweep away the superfluous lumber, rejecting the ideograms, the homophones, the polyphones, the syllabics, and the symbolic signs, to which the Egyptian scribes so fondly clung, and so to leave revealed in its grand simplicity the nearly perfect alphabet of which, without knowing it, they had been virtually in possession for almost countless centuries."

Edward Clodd adds to this statement the following observation:

"That step they never took, but continued the use of eye-pictures side by side with that of ear-pictures, instead of passing to the use of fixed signs for certain sounds."

He further says:

"Between this rise and decline the Phœnicians had put the alphabet into practically the present form, and secured its adoption by the Greeks. But if they did not derive it from the Egyptian hieratic, whence came it? No definite answer is forthcoming, and perhaps none ever will be. * * * They got rid of surplus signs, of the lumber of determinatives and the

like, and invented an alphabet which, if it was not perfect (as no alphabet can be, because the letters are not revised from time to time to represent changes in sound) was of such signal value as to have been accepted by the civilized world of the past, and to have secured, with slight modifications, a permanence assured to no other invention of the human race."

III.

MEMORY IN ANCIENT DAYS.

The memories of some of the famous men of antiquity, especially, seem miraculous to a person whose own treacherous memory, like a bag with holes, lets everything slip through that he puts into it. Books, which are a kind of artificial memory, impair the recollection of many of the moderns. Having few such storehouses of knowledge, the ancients were compelled to carry all their intellectual treasures in their heads. Men found no difficulty in remembering the twenty-four books of Homer, before the art of writing was invented. Cyrus knew the name of every soldier in his army. Themistocles could call the name of every one of the twenty thousand citizens of Athens. Seneca could repeat two thousand proper names in the order in which they had been told him, and could recite two hundred verses read to him for the first time by as many different persons. He tells us that the Emperor Hadrian could repeat two thousand words in the order he heard them. Cinna, the plenipotentiary

sent by Pyrrhus to the Roman senate, having been entertained at a banquet at which all the leading senators were present, addressed every one of them at their session the next morning accurately by name.

Prodigious as are these feats, they have been paralleled within the last three or four centuries. Michael-angelo had on his lips the greater part of the poetry of Dante and Petrarch; and so had Galileo of Ariosto and Petrarch. Berni Locke says that that "prodigy of parts," Pascal, knew the whole Bible by heart. Leibnitz, even when old, could repeat nearly all the poetry of Vergil, word by word.

—William Mathews.

IV.

THE ORIGINAL ALPHABET.

The Hebrew is a language with which the Canaanitish and Phœnician (Punic) nearly coincide, holding a relation in its character, as well as in its geographical position, about midway between the Arabic and the Aramaic. All these languages are related to each other in much the same manner as those of the Germanic family. They are now either wholly extinct, as is the case with the Phœnician, or they exist only in altered and decayed forms, though the modern Jews, in their writings, aim at the reproduction of the language of the Old Testament.

The written form of a language is never so perfect as to express all its various shades of sound. The writing of the Semites (Phœnicians, Jews, etc.) has one

very remarkable imperfection, viz., that only the consonants (which do indeed constitute the kernel and body of language) were written out as real letters; whilst, of the vowel sounds, only the more prolonged ones, and not always even these, were represented by certain consonants. * * * How imperfect and indefinite such a mode of writing was, is easily seen; yet during the whole period in which the Hebrew was a spoken language, no other signs for vowels were employed. Reading was, therefore, a harder task than with our modern, adequate modes of writing, and much must have been supplied by the reader's knowledge of the living mother-tongue.

But when the Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language, and the danger of losing the correct pronunciation, as well as the perplexities arising from this indefinite mode of writing, continually increased, the vowel signs, or points, were invented, which minutely settled what previously had been left uncertain. Of the date of this invention we have no account; but a comparison of historical facts warrants the conclusion that the vowel system was not completed till about the seventh century of the Christian era. * * * Dissimilar as the different Semitic alphabets may appear, they yet all proceed by various tendencies and modifications, from one and the same original alphabet. Of this the truest copy, among all existing specimens of alphabetic writing, is preserved in the Phœnician, from which sprang the old Greek and, mediately, all the European written characters.

—Dr. Gesenius.

V.

THE STATEMENT OF HERODOTUS.

Now these Phœnicians who came with Cadmus, of whom were the Gephyraians, introduced among the Greeks many arts when they settled in this land of Bœotia, and especially letters, which had not existed before that time. At first they brought in those which are used by the Phœnician race generally; but afterwards, as time went on, they changed, with their sounds, the form of the letters also. During this time the Ionians were the Greek people who lived near them, in most of the places where they were; and these having received letters by instruction of the Phœnicians changed their form slightly, and so made use of them; and in so doing, they declared that these were called "phœnicians," which was proper, since the Phœnician people had brought them into Greece. Also the Ionians from ancient times have called paper "skins," because formerly, as paper was scarce, they used skins of goats and of sheep; and even in my own time, many of the barbarians were writing on such skins.

—Herodotus, Book V.

VI.

THE LETTERS OF CADMUS.

The letters which the Greeks received from Cadmus, according to popular belief, were fifteen in number. Of these the Greeks utilized eleven as consonants, and four

as vowels. The letters, with their Greek names and forms, were as follows:

Alpha,	Α	Mu,	Μ
Beta,	Β	Nu,	Ν
Gamma,	Γ	Omicron,	Ο
Delta,	Δ	Pi,	Π
Epsilon,	Ε	Rho,	Ρ
Iota,	Ι	Sigma,	Σ
Kappa,	Κ	Tau,	Τ
Lambda,	Λ		

To these perhaps should be added the Greek *Upsilon* (Y), which may have been developed (like the *Omicron*) from *Ayin*, since it resembles, somewhat, the Hebrew form of that letter.

Other Greek letters are said to have been added by the Greeks themselves, and have been attributed to Palamides, Simonides, and Epicharmes. Authorities differ as to the letters added by each; moreover the tradition is unreliable from the fact that the added letters are found in inscriptions which must have been written before the period in which these writers lived.

Doubtless the Greek language became more and more refined, after the adoption of the primitive alphabet, and thus developed gradually a need for more letters as nicer distinctions of sound were made. Several of the added letters were evidently derived from the Phœnician letters not previously adopted.

VII.

RADICAL DIFFERENCES THE ELEMENTS OF LANGUAGES.

To persons unaccustomed to a comparison of languages it may seem strange that sounds which are uttered naturally and with ease by one tribe of people are often wholly wanting in the languages of others, and by some are even found impossible to utter. However, an illustration of the radical differences which are found in the vocal sounds of contemporaneous and neighboring tribes has been offered in our own country. Bancroft says of the American Indians:

"The tribes vary in their choice of sounds. The Oneidas have always changed the letter *R*. The Algonkins have no *F*. The Iroquois family never use the semivowel [liquid] *M*, or the labials [P and B]. The Cherokees are destitute of the labials, but employ the semivowels. Of the several dialects of the Iroquois, that of the Oneidas is the most soft, being the only one that admits the letter *L;* that of the Senecas is the rudest and most energetic. The Algonkin dialects, especially those of the Abenakis, heap up consonants with prodigal harshness. The Iroquois abound in a concurrence of vowels. In the Cherokee every syllable ends with a vowel."

VIII.

ORTHOGRAPHY AND ORTHOEPY.

We may smile at these repeated attempts of the learned English, in their invention of [phonetic] alphabets, to establish the correspondence of pro-

nunciation with orthography, and at their vowelly conceits to melodize our orthoepy. All these, however, demonstrate that our language has never been written as it ought to have been. All our writers have experienced this difficulty. Considerable changes in spelling were introduced at various periods, by way of experiment. This liberty was used by Elizabethan writers for an improvement upon the orthography of Gower and Chaucer. Since the days of Anne, we have further deviated; yet, after all our efforts, we are constrained to read words not as they are written, and to write different words with the same letters, which leaves them ambiguous.

We may sympathize with the disconcerted foreigner who is a learner of the English language. All words ending in *ugh* must confound him. For instance, *though*, *through*, and *enough*, alike written, are each differently pronounced; and should he give us *bough* rightly, he may be forgiven should he blunder at *cough*. If he escape safely from *though*, the same wind will blow him out of *thought*. * * * It is true that the pedantry of scholarship has put its sovereign veto against the practice of writing words as they are spoken, even could the orthoepy ever have been settled by an unquestioned standard. When it was proposed to omit the mute *b* in *doubt* and *debt*, it was objected that by this castration of a superfluous letter in the pronunciation we should lose sight of the Latin original. The same circumstance occurred in the reform of the French orthography. It was objected to the innovators that when they wrote *tems*,

rejecting the *p* in *temps*, they wholly lost sight of the Latin original, *tempus*.

An orthography which would be more natural to an unlearned reader is rejected by the etyomologist, whose pride and pomp exult in tracing the legitimacy of words to their primitives, and delight to write them as near as may be according to the analogy of language.

—Isaac Disraeli.

IX.

REFORM IN SPELLING.

The irregularities of English spelling are too well known to need more than brief mention. According to Mr. A. J. Ellis, the distinguished specialist in the pronunciation of Old English, the letter *a* is used to represent eight different sounds; *e*, eight; *i*, seven; *o*, twelve; *u*, nine; *y*, three. Twenty-one consonants have seventy sounds, averaging three and a third apiece; but while there is much difficulty in determining the proper pronunciation from the spelling, it is still more difficult to ascertain the proper letters with which to represent the spoken word. The sound of *e* in *be* has no less than forty equivalents in the language; *a* in *mate* has thirty-four. Mr. Ellis has shown that the single word *scissors*, which is composed of six elementary sounds (*s*, short *i*, *z*, short *r*, and *z*), could be spelled in a vast number of ways; for example, the person familiar with the words *schism*, *sieve*, *myrrh*,

visor, scourge, suffice, might spell the word scissors *schiesourrhce.* The fact that one is never quite sure of the pronunciation of a new printed word he has only heard pronounced and not seen in print, is sufficient to prove the illogical and capricious character of English spelling. * * *

Notwithstanding this, the selection and adoption of a phonetic alphabet is impossible by any agency known to the English-speaking people. The principle of local self-government prevails wherever Anglo-Saxon is spoken, and there is a jealousy on the part of the people with regard to the use or usurpation of dictatorial powers; hence neither national nor international commissions can be expected that will decide upon the question of a particular alphabet and phonetic spelling. The method by which reforms are brought about in English-speaking countries is, therefore, that of a gradual process of growth; a very small item of reform is recommended and brought into usage by degrees.

—Dr. William T. Harris.

X.

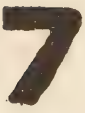
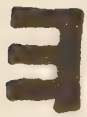
THE STUDY OF "WHAT CAME TO BE."

All our institutions, our habits of thought, and modes of action are inheritances from preceding ages; no conscious advance, no worthy reform, can be secured without both a knowledge of the present and an appreciation of how forces have worked in the social and political organization of former times.

If this be so, we need not seriously argue that the boys and girls in the schoolroom should be introduced to the past, which has created the present,—that historical-mindedness should be in some slight measure bred within them, and that they should be given the habit, or the beginnings of a habit, of considering what has been, when they discuss what is or what should be. History has to do with the becoming of past events,—not simply with what was, but with what *came to be*,—and in studying the simplest forms of historical narrative, even the average pupil comes to see that one thing leads to another. He begins quite unconsciously to see that events do not simply succeed each other in time, but that one grows out of another, or rather, out of a combination of many others.

—Report of the Committee of Seven on The Study of History in Schools.

THE PHŒNICIAN AND HEBREW ALPHABETS.

PHŒNICIAN	NAME	HEBREW
	Aleph	א
	Beth	ב
	Gimel	ג
	Daleth	ד
	He	ה

PHŒNICIAN	NAME	HEBREW
	Vav	ו
	Zayin	ז
	Cheth	ח
	Teth	ט
	Yod	י
	Kaph	כ

PHŒNICIAN	NAME	HEBREW
	Lamed	ל
	Mem	מ
	Nun	נ
	Samech	ס
	Ayin	ע
	Pi	פ

PHŒNICIAN	NAME	HEBREW
	Tsaddi	צ
	Koph	ק
	Resh	ר
	Shin Sin	ש
	Tav	ת

THE GREEK AND LATIN ALPHABETS.

GREEK	NAME	LATIN	NAME
Α	Alpha	A	A (ah)
Β	Beta (ba′ta)	B	Be (bay)
Γ	Gamma	C	Ce (kay)
Δ	Delta	D	De (day)
Ε	Epsilon (ep′silon)	E	E (eh)
Ζ	Zeta (za′ta)	F	Ef (ef)
Η	Eta (a′ta)	G	Ge (gay)
Θ	Theta (tha′ta)	H	H (hah)
Ι	Iota (e-o′ta)	I	I (ee)

GREEK	NAME	LATIN	NAME
Κ	Kappa	K	Ka (kah)
Λ	Lambda	L	El (el)
Μ	Mu (mü)*	M	Em (em)
Ν	Nu (nü)*	N	En (en)
Ξ	Ksi (ksee)	O	O (oh)
Ο	O′micron	P	Pe (pay)
Π	Pi (pe)	Q	Qu (koo)
Ρ	Rho	R	Er (air)
Σ	Sigma	S	Es (ess)
Τ	Tau (tou)	T	T (tay)

* Like the German *Ü*, or the French *U*.

GREEK	NAME	LATIN	NAME
Υ	Upsilon (ü-psilon)*	V U	U (oo)
Φ	Phi (fee)	X	Ex (eex)
Χ	Chi (kee)	Y	Ü *
Ψ	Psi (psee)	Z	Zeta (zay′ta)
Ω	O′mega		

* Like the German *Ü*, or the French *U*.

1649